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Department of Local Government,
Industry Regulation and Safety



Monthly incident insights

WorkSafe Mines Safety

August 2025 edition

Issued 18 September 2025

167 notifiable
incidents in
August

154 reportable
incidents in
August

 **41** notifiable
incidents
compared to July

 **4** reportable
incidents
compared to July

4 Four summarised incidents in this special edition

Note: Correct as of 12 September 2025.

Report a notifiable incident to
1800 678 198

Report all incidents online
[SRS – Safety Regulation System](#)

Special edition: Conveyor guarding

Western Australian companies use conveyors throughout the State's mining and resources sector. However, they remain one of the most hazardous types of plant. Serious and fatal incidents persist when workers come into contact with moving parts, including tail drums, rollers, pulleys, idlers and nip points, and their clothes, tools or limbs become entangled in a matter of seconds.

Guarding is the primary control measure to prevent access to these danger zones. Under the Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022, effective guarding must be in place wherever there's a risk of injury from moving parts. Guarding must also prevent deliberate access while still allowing safe inspection,

cleaning and maintenance, which are common activities when incidents occur.

Despite clear legal requirements and long-standing industry learnings, deficiencies in conveyor guarding remain a recurring cause of serious harm. Common issues found include:

- guards not being designed, installed or maintained to the required standard;
- guards being removed or bypassed to carry out maintenance and makeshift repairs or clear blockages and spills;
- inadequate lockout/tagout procedures during cleaning or when blockages occur; and;
- workers not receiving training to recognise and report poor guarding standards.

The four successful WorkSafe prosecutions in this special edition highlight the devastating consequences of inadequate conveyor guarding and serve as reminders that these failures are both preventable and enforceable under the law.

Successful prosecutions

Fatality from unguarded conveyor

An experienced plant operator was fatally injured after becoming entangled in the mechanism of a salt pit conveyor.

Critically, the conveyor guard wasn't in place at the time. Even when fitted, the guard was often left unsecured and could be removed without a tool. Investigations revealed that operators sometimes removed the guarding to insert cardboard between the conveyor belt and the drive drum, thereby stopping the belt from slipping. This unsafe practice was known to supervisors and had become routine.

Following the incident, the company installed permanent fencing, lockable gates and an interlock switch that automatically de-energised the conveyor motor to prevent access to moving parts.

Outcome: In what was the first prosecution for a workplace fatality under the *Work Health and Safety*

Act 2020, the company was fined \$875,000.

[Read the media release](#)

Worker's arm amputated in conveyor crush point

A labour hire worker suffered a traumatic amputation when one of their arms was caught in the crush point between a conveyor belt and a roller at a recycling plant.

The worker had been employed as a picker, responsible for removing unsuitable items from conveyor belts and clearing blockages. They were dragged into the crush point when, after a blockage had been cleared and the belts restarted, they reached in to remove a rock. There was no guarding in place around the conveyor's crush points, and no lockout/tagout procedure to isolate moving parts during such tasks.

The Managing Director of the company worked regularly on site and had the control and authority to implement appropriate safety measures, but these weren't in place.

Outcome: The company was fined \$230,000—reduced from \$330,000 on appeal—and its Managing Director was fined \$70,000.

[Read the media release](#)

Serious injuries from tail-end pulley

A worker sustained severe injuries to their back and both of their arms while operating an alluvial screening and crushing plant.

The incident occurred when the worker attempted to use a tool to remove a rock from the nip point of a conveyor's tail-end pulley without switching off or isolating the equipment. Their arms were pulled into

the pinch point, and they were only able to free themselves when the pulley came to a stop.

Investigations found that the conveyor had no physical guarding to prevent access to the nip point. There was no isolation procedure in place. Also, the worker was operating alone without adequate training or supervision. These deficiencies placed the worker at significant risk.

Outcome: The company was fined \$230,000 and ordered to pay \$75,000 in costs.

[Read the media release](#)

Worker's arm caught in unguarded conveyor during repair

A worker suffered fractures, lacerations and burns after their arm was pulled into the tail-end pulley of a conveyor system on a shell-bagging machine at a mine site.

The incident occurred while the worker was assisting with repairs to the machine. The conveyor's guarding had been removed to allow access for the repair, but the machine was not de-energised. The worker switched it on and slipped, causing their arm to be drawn into the pulley.

Investigations revealed multiple failings:

- The conveyor wasn't fitted with a lockout switch or emergency stop device.
- The guarding had been removed, exposing hazardous moving parts.
- The worker had not been provided with training in safe isolation procedures.

These deficiencies left the worker vulnerable to serious injury and reflected poor control of known risks.

Outcome: The company was fined \$20,000.

[Read the media release](#)

Key learnings

These incidents highlight recurring and preventable failures in managing conveyor and plant-related risks. To prevent similar occurrences, WorkSafe reminds WA companies of these critical control measures:

1. Effective guarding

- Install and maintain guarding that fully prevents access to dangerous moving parts, such as pulleys, rollers and nip points.
- Guards must be secure, not easily removed without a tool and not create a risk in itself.
- Guards must also make bypassing or disabling, whether deliberately or accidentally, as difficult as is reasonably practicable.

2. Isolation and lockout/tagout (LOTO)

- Always de-energise and isolate equipment before conducting inspection, maintenance, cleaning or clearing tasks.
- Provide workers with lockout devices and ensure they practise procedures until these become routine.

3. Training and competency

- Train workers to identify guarding deficiencies, isolate machinery and follow safe systems of work.
- Supervisors and managers must ensure training translates into safe practice on site.

4. Safe systems of work

- Shortcuts such as bypassing guards or improvising fixes (for example, using cardboard on conveyor drums) must never be tolerated.

5. Supervision and accountability

- Work must be appropriately supervised, particularly where less experienced workers are involved.

- Officers and managers carry legal responsibilities to ensure systems are in place and enforced.
- Inspections should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure guards and other controls are in place to mitigate the risk of injury or death.

6. Incident response and site preservation

- The site of any notifiable incident, including a death of a person, serious injury or illness or a dangerous incident, must be preserved until regulators have attended, unless disturbances are necessary to prevent further harm.
- Altering or continuing work before an investigation undermines both safety and compliance obligations.

Conveyors and screening plants are essential to mining and quarrying operations, but when guarding, isolation and safe systems of work are overlooked, the consequences can be catastrophic. Strong safety leadership, robust controls and procedures, and a commitment to continuous improvement are vital to protecting workers and meeting legal duties.

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