

**DEPARTMENT MINERAL RESOURCES
MPUMALANGA REGION**

NEWSFLASH

REPORT OF A FATAL ACCIDENT

2011-07-08

INTRODUCTION

A fitter was fatally injured and his assistant sustained multiple injuries when they were flung against the stage loader by the airblast when the initial goaf in the shortwall suddenly came down. The initial goaf had advanced 45m when the accident occurred. The confined space between the stage loader and the side wall of the belt road accelerated the air velocity contributing to the force of the airblast. The fitter and his assistant were entering the shortwall along the stage loader towards the maingate when the goaf suddenly came down.

FINDINGS

- Evidence from both underground and surface inspections indicated that the initial goaf had suddenly caved resulting in the airblast experienced at the shortwall maingate area.
- No equipment or infrastructure damage was seen at the shortwall, however, evidence of a severe airblast could be observed from the damage to ventilation appliances and debris blown from the area.
- The narrow area between the stage loader and side wall of belt road most probably accelerated the air velocity in this area.
- The fitter and his assistant were entering along the stage loader into the shortwall when the accident occurred.
- The force of the airblast flung them both into the stage loader steel work causing the injuries.

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