

SAFETY ALERT

Vehicle and other Mobile Plant Fires

This alert highlights the importance of inspection and maintenance to reduce the risk of fire in vehicles and other mobile plant.

Background

In the first half of 2011, NT WorkSafe received in excess of 20 notifications of fires in vehicles and other mobile plant. The incidents have occurred throughout the Territory, with the bulk of incidences occurring in the mining industry. The majority of the fires have been attributed to component failure and/or inadequate maintenance.

Contributing factors

- Inadequate scope and/or scheduling of maintenance and inspection of vehicles and plant.
- Hydraulic oil contact with hot engine areas.
- Poor maintenance leading to a buildup of combustible material (lubricant and fuels) near heat or ignition sources.
- Ineffective isolation of ignition sources such as battery terminals.

Action required

Recommended control measures to prevent similar incidents occurring include:

- Systematic inspection of all components within a hydraulic or fuel supply circuit during routine part replacements.
- Proactively monitoring of hydraulic hoses including checks on hose connections, clamps and pressure relief valves.
- Adopt a risk based hydraulic hose management system.

- Verify internal maintenance systems with additional quality checks by manufacturers or authorised service providers.
- Evaluate isolation techniques such as shielding for potential engine heat sources or insulation of hoses near hot components.
- Routine inspection of electrical systems for corrosion or insulation fatigue.
- Consider the location and rating of protective devices such as fuses and wiring control.
- Install, maintain and systematically inspect fire detection and automatic fire suppression systems on vehicles or plant operating at a higher risk of fire.
- Install portable fire extinguishers on all mobile plant.
- Provide appropriate training to all mobile plant staff on hydraulic hazards, fire detection and response procedures.

Further information

Australian Standard

- *AS 5062 – 2006 Fire Protection for Mobile and Transportable Equipment.*

Contact Details

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For more information on workplace health and safety, go to NT WorkSafe's website: worksafe.nt.gov.au

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