

Record \$1.05 Million Fine Imposed for Mine Fatalities



Two underground mine workers were transferring muck from above the 3,000 foot level through a transfer gate they were operating using a remote control pendant. Although there was a protected area for workers at that location, to view the movement of muck and use the remote pendant, they had to be in front of and fully exposed to the transfer gate. A sudden and uncontrolled release of muck, sand and water erupted through the gate, burying one worker and hitting the other. Both died from massive injuries. The MOL investigation found that the hang-up of wet muck was a result of the mining company not dealing with water issues in the mine. The mining company pleaded guilty to three safety violations and was fined \$350,000 for each violation for a total fine of \$1,050,000—the highest ever total fine levied for OHS violations in Ontario [Vale Canada Ltd., Govt. News Release, Sept. 17, 2013].