N. American Salt, Cote Blanche Mine

FATAL ACCIDENT: APRIL 16, 2013
Overview

Underground salt mine in Louisiana

2, 11-hr shifts; 155 total employees

Salt undercut and hauled to underground crusher, then skipped to surface via 16’ φ shaft
Incident Description

Victim and others replacing bushing of rope guide within shaft
Piece of salt broke loose
Fell onto victim, striking across head and upper body
Victim found suspended by fall protection
Transported, pronounced dead in hospital
Findings

Shaft was not scaled prior to work- no certainty existed on safety of ground conditions.

Appropriate fall protection was used, this did not contribute to the accident.

Relative humidity was high on the day of the accident. This may have caused an effective ‘spalling’ of salt from the walls of the shaft.
Root Causes

1. Unsafe ground conditions in shaft.
2. No falling object protection where work underway.
Best Practices for Prevention

Ensure work areas are scaled before work begins

Minimize work performed within shaft - replacing bushings or other components at the surface.

Work under falling object protection at any time ground conditions not certainly safe.