Poor Maintenance Causes Fatality

A loader operator was pulling a conveyer to a new job site. He had been operating a loader on mining leases for approximately five months and was described as being "quite careful" in his driving.

The transfer had taken two long days of driving over rough terrain. Two co-workers had preceded him on the same route in order to pick up a trailer and meet him there. But the operator failed to arrive at his destination.

Worried, his co-workers decided to retrace their route. They found him pinned face down under the left front wheel of the loader. He had been crushed to death.

The inquiry revealed that the loader had come over the crest of a hill on the secondary gravel road and suddenly veered into a steep ditch. The ditch was about 10 to 12 feet deep and both the loader and the conveyor remained upright.

Mechanical inspection revealed that the loader he was operating was in extremely poor mechanical condition – having practically no brakes and very loose steering.

To ensure both the safety and protection of not only the operators of equipment but also of anyone else working around it, mechanical inspection should be done on a regular basis. If a piece of equipment is not in safe condition it should not be used until the necessary repairs are made. Maintenance should be followed up by regular mechanical checks on all equipment throughout the year.