

Shared Learning

Critical Risk: Mobile Plant

Trench Collapse – Vehicle Rollover

What happened?

Excavator was tracking parallel to a trench with in 1 metre of the trench wall.

Once stationary, the operator slewed the boom over the open trench section and the trench wall collapsed.

The excavator slipped into the trench. The trench had been open for some weeks and the site had endured approx. 40mm rain over a 48 hr period.

No-one was injured. Insignificant damage caused.

North Island Solar Farm

Key Findings:

The operator chose to perform a task that was not inline with the SWMS – Minimum 1m distance must be maintained between plant /equipment and trench edge.

Post weather event inspections were not conducted to review the integrity of the site and any open trenches before works commenced.

Spotter was position behind the excavator and therefore was not guiding movements.



Picture of excavator when it slipped into trench after wall collapsed

