



Safety Alert – Thawing Frozen Material

What Occurred:

- A bearing on the tail pulley of the screen feed conveyor on the portable plant broke. The repair took longer than expected, resulting in material being left in the hopper overnight.
- The next day the hopper was one-third full of frozen material. To thaw the material two employees stood approximately 2 ft off the ground, on a 4" area of the plant frame. The employees were approximately 4.5 ft from one another, on opposite sides of the hopper, each one using a weed burner.
- One of the employees was wearing ice cleats while standing on the steel frame, resulting in his foot slipping, losing balance and waving his arm, while holding the weed burner, in attempt to regain his balance.
- The waving motion resulted in the employee passing the torch in front of the other employee's face, singeing his mustache and eyebrows and causing a slight burn to his face.

Contributing Causes:

- The tail pulley bearing on the screen feed conveyor failed
- Material was left in the hopper overnight, which froze due to the cold temperatures
- Insecure footing from wearing ice cleats on a metal surface
- Lack of face and fire protection (PPE) while using a weed burner
- Inadequate distance between employees while using a weed burner

Preventative Actions:

- Screen panels in tail pulley guards so you can monitor Tail Pulley
- Safe access for all jobs
- No ice cleats on steel surfaces only snow and Ice
- Make sure to wear proper PPE
- Train miners to stop/pause work when changes in the process occur and determine if any new hazards were created

