Wedge Of Rock Falls Into Tunnel



Three workers were crushed by a rockfall in a mine tunnel, resulting in one death. The fatality occurred when the experienced mine crew was working near the site of a previous incident caused by a rockfall. There was a large crack in the rock. Concern about partial collapse of the sides of the tunnel resulted in a meeting between the foreman and a rock specialist. They had noted a smaller crack was forming a wedge-shaped rock which could fall.

The crew was advised of the situation and was to continue their work of securing the tunnel by installing rock bolts. One of the crew went to obtain some longer rock bolts. The other three workers were under the rock wedge when it came down.

Two survived the crushing injuries but the third worker died.

If this crew had adhered to the usual principle of working only under supported rock, this fatality could have been avoided. Better training and education of workers about hazards will help prevent these types of incidents. Improved communication about safety techniques will help workers become aware of the hazards as well as the safeguards for working safely.