

## **Fatal Alert**

On September 14, 2017, a five man crew of high scalers were scaling rock on a section of road way near the Buffalo Bill Dam. The crew had prescaled the area of rocks that were easy and manageable to move or dislodge by hand and hand tools. The crew was in the process of bringing up a high angle wagon drill to begin drilling for the large scale areas. The four high scalers on the hill were stationed in the safe area as to not kick rocks down on the drill operator.

The drill operator had climbed the 13 foot slope to the area of the rock anchor attachment point with the free spooled winch cable of the attached winch on the wagon drill. The drill operator climbed back down the slope to the drill and tightened the winch cable. The cable was off line approximately 2 feet from the center of the winch. As tension was added to the cable by the weight of the Wagon Drill, the cable came inline sliding across the face of the slope kicking out a rectangular rock the approximate size of a basketball. Scaler #1 yelled, "Rock, rock, rock" as did the other four scalers on the slope to warn the drill operator. The drill operator at ground level heard his coworkers and moved horizontally away from the rock drill towards the roadway. The rock hit the lip of the slope flying away from the slope and struck the drill operator in the head. Emergency services were called and the drill operator was transported to the local Hospital. The drill operator passed away on September 28, 2017 as the result of the injuries he sustained.

## **Significant Factors**

- The drill operator had been trained on the operation of the drill, and some rigging and hoisting from a past job. The rigging and hoisting training had not been verified to be effective.
- The hazard of the winch line was not recognized.
- The winch was installed by the employer without the approval of the manufacturer.

## **Recommendations**

- The employer should evaluate the training received by employees from past employment to ensure the effectiveness of the training.
- The employer should develop an assessment tool to help in the evaluation of past training, as well retention of training
- The employer should ensure that the modification of the winch installed on the wagon drill is approved by the manufacturer of the wagon drill.