



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 99-12

IDENTIFYING CONTROL PANEL VALVES

WHAT HAPPENED:

The crew reported to work without one crewmember. The rig supervisor assisted the crew in making a connection. After they completed the connection, they removed the slips from the rotary bushings. One of the crewmembers placed the lead tongs against the A-Frame with a small securing chain. The rig supervisor engaged the # 1 Mud Pump clutch. While watching the pump pressure gauge, he reached up and engaged what he presumed was the # 1 mud pump throttle. Instead, he engaged the clutch to the breakout line on the lead tongs. This forced the tongs to move from their secured position towards the drawworks. They struck the employee and pinned him against the drawworks. The employee suffered five broken ribs, a punctured left lung, several abrasions and a bruised left arm.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

1. The rig supervisor was fatigued, as he had been at the rig for several days due to the fishing job currently going on.
2. The rig supervisor may have been unfamiliar with the operation of the rig, which caused him to grab the wrong lever.
3. Mud from the operation in progress covered the control panel and the valve labels could not be read.
4. The crew was working shorthanded on a labor intensive well.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

1. When necessary to relieve a regular employee, supervisors should become familiar with the equipment and pay close attention to the controls they are operating.
2. All valve and equipment controls should be clearly labeled.
3. All control panels should be cleaned as necessary so labels are readable at all times.

The Corrective Actions stated in this alert are one company's attempts to address the incident, and do not necessarily reflect the position of IADC or the IADC HSE Committee.

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Issued April 1999