



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 99-15

HANDRAIL INSPECTIONS AND SAFETY

WHAT HAPPENED:

A rig was being rigged down and four employees were unhooking the mudline to stack out for transport. Two employees were working on the ground and two were on the mudtank walkway. One of the employees on the walkway leaned out against the handrail to help lift the hose from the two employees on the ground. As the employee leaned out, the handrail gave way and the employee fell about 10 feet (3 meters) to the ground. One of the employees on the ground was able to break his fall. Fortunately, his only injury was a small fracture to the top of his foot when he struck a hose stand.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

1. When the handrails were fabricated, they were designed to lie to the outside of the mud tank during transport. The employees stated that for at least two years, the handrails had been stacked to the inside (top of walkway) and left connected.
2. The rails are designed where they can pivot in both direction and remain intact. Upon examination of the handrail bolt seat, it was found to be worn where the bolt could easily pop loose when pressure was applied. The employee, when he leaned against the handrail, applied enough pressure for the rail to pop loose.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

1. All handrails should be regularly inspected to ensure proper placement of connections or seats.
2. If the handrails are to be stacked to the inside in the future, the rails should be made more secure and the seats done away with. (Engineer potential hazards out of equipment.)
3. Handrails should be constructed in accordance with applicable government or industry-developed standards.
4. Employees should avoid leaning out over handrails when possible.

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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