



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 05 – 38

LADDER INCIDENT - DRILLER FRACTURES BACK AND WRIST IN FALL

WHAT HAPPENED:

A driller was positioned on an extension ladder inside the drilling rig's substructure. He was attempting to tighten a fitting on a hydraulic hose with an 18-inch pipe wrench. The wrench slipped off the fitting, causing the driller to lose his footing on the ladder and fall to the rig matting below. The distance of the fall was less than three meters (9.8 feet); the pipe wrench was in good working order, there were no slippery substances on the rungs of the ladder; and the driller's footwear was in good condition.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

The driller took an unsafe position on the ladder. He did not have one hand available to hold onto the ladder or other support (i.e., fall protection). As a result, he was not following proper procedures for completing a task inside the rig substructure while working at a potentially unsafe height, below three meters, on an extension ladder.

Contributing Factors:

The driller was also not in compliance with the company's Fall Protection Policy. This policy states that "All workers shall use the fall protection systems when working at a height above three meters (9.8 feet) or if a falling hazard exists."

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: To address this incident, this company did the following:

- Create a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) on "Working in the Cellar while at Heights," and review with all personnel the risks of working at potentially unsafe heights. Serious injuries may occur when falling from less than three meters.
- Attach/weld engineered 5,000-pound-rated lug for fall protection in strategic areas inside the substructure. These anchor points will optimize the fall protection system for completing tasks inside the substructure while working at potentially unsafe heights.
- Evaluate all rigs in fleet for working at a potentially unsafe height hazard (falls from less than three meters) and provide mitigation.
- Reinforce the company's present and ongoing plan in proactive risk assessment through the use of hazard identification tools (JSAs and the Do-It Program).
- Promote the performance of a Basic Risk Assessment. Before starting any task, workers should ask these four questions:
 1. What could go wrong?
 2. How could that affect me/us?
 3. What can I/we do about it?
 4. Will my/our actions create other problems?

IADC Note: Refer to Alerts: 99-14, 99-16, 02-19,

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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