



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 05 – 01

PERSONNEL HOISTING INCIDENT RESULTS IN A FATALITY

WHAT HAPPENED:

The crew was pressure testing the BOP's and various members were attending to different tasks in preparation to drilling out the surface casing shoe. The upper Kelly cock did not hold its pressure for the required time so the decision was made to adjust the valve and retest. The floorhand put on his fall arrest harness and the driller hoisted him up 12 metres (40 ft.) above the rig floor using the winch line. From that position he could turn the valve slightly and then they could retest. When this was accomplished, the driller started to lower him back down on the winch line. For reasons that cannot be explained, the floorhand swung himself over to the derrick leg supported his own weight and the line went slack. It appears that he disconnected from the winch line, lost his grip on the derrick and fell about 10 metres (33 ft) to the floor.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

Improper procedure and lack of fall protection. Using a non-man rated winchline to hoist personnel is prohibited. Company PPE Policy and Safe Work Practices state: "All work 3 metres (10 ft) or more above the rig floor must be performed using a safety harness attached to a lanyard." Other Industry Safety Alerts and Memo's over the past year or so have addressed this procedure and the need to use self-retracting lifelines when ascending or descending the derrick. The sign at the bottom of the rig mast (affixed to the Drillers' console) states "Attention – Climbing device must be worn when working on derrick". The climbing device mentioned incorporates a full body safety harness with chest D-ring for attaching to the self-retracting lifeline (SRL) and a back D-ring with an attached shock absorber. The chest D-ring is attached to the SRL when ascending and descending the derrick. The rear D-ring with shock absorber is attached to a safety lanyard of suitable length. This is to be used when working at the monkeyboard or at other locations in the derrick. Company Fall Protection Policies and Safe Work procedures were not followed in this case.

Contributing Factors and Root Causes: Recent industry safety alerts (PSC #38-2004) indicate that there has been a practice of using the winchline (connected to the fall protection harness) to hoist personnel into a position where they can perform elevated work. Although this practice appears to be more prominent and perhaps tolerated in the other sectors of the local oil and gas industry, it was against the drilling contractor's company policies and safe work practices.

In addition to the above factors, obstructed visibility, poor communication, and lack of proper signaling may have complicated an unacceptable and unsafe work practice. Although a Safety Meeting was conducted with the Pressure Tester it appears that fall protection issues were not a component of the documented pre-job safety discussion or later when the job tasks were modified due to adjust the leaking valve.

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

The company reinforced existing standards associated with raising personnel, fall protection requirements, and safe work procedures.

Crews were directed to discuss Occupational Health & Safety Code Part 37 – Section 770, and related Safety Alerts/Bulletins (CAODC General Bulletin 02-12, PSC Safety Alert: #38-2004) and record their responses in the Rig Site Health and Safety Committee Minutes.

The company directed that while pressure testing, all upper Kelly-cocks be adjusted at the rig floor. If the valve does not hold pressure, the pressure is to be bled off, the annular preventer opened and the Kelly lowered to where the valve can be operated safely from the floor. It can then be raised back into position and retested.

Additional crewmembers will be trained in the industry Fall Protection for Rig Workers Course.

Rig Managers must enforce health and safety rules, which are a condition of employment. Failure to wear proper fall protection and adhere to safe work practices is grounds for dismissal.

The company is also assessing the need for man-rated lifting equipment and reviewing fall protection JSA's.

IADC Note: See Alerts – 01-02, 01-16, 02-32, 02-54, 03-18, 03-37, and Section 19 of the IADC HSE Reference Guide.

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.

This material is presented for information purposes only. Managers & Supervisors should evaluate this information to determine if it can be applied to their own situations and practices

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