



# Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

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ALERT 06 – 26

## CLEANING MUD FROM DRILL COLLARS RESULTS IN FINGER AMPUTATION

### WHAT HAPPENED:

A Floorman suffered an amputated finger by using a rig light safety cable to strip compacted “gumbo” mud off of a drill collar while the drill collar was being rotated into the hole. By the time the driller noticed and stopped the pipe from rotating, the eye of the lanyard had completely removed the flesh from the first joint of the middle finger of his left hand. The doctor later decided the skin could not be reattached and surgically removed the remaining bone.

### WHAT CAUSED IT:

The driller was experiencing down-hole well problems and was focused on his console instruments. He did not notice that the Floorman made a short search and returned with a 24” long lanyard and was attempting to use it to remove the “gumbo” from the pipe.

The employee slipped a finger of each hand into the lanyard eyes at each end and over the pipe attempting to “cut” the mud off the pipe as it went down into the hole. When another Floorman attempted to assist with the stripping, one end of the safety cable lanyard was dropped causing the lanyard to wrap around the pipe catching the employee’s finger.

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:** To address this incident, this company instructed rig personnel in the following:

- First thing - Never put anything on rotating pipe!
- Secondly, the supervisor on the floor (driller) was focused on one specific aspect of his job. The Floorman performing another operation at the same time is called “simultaneous operations” and special action must be taken when working in this situation. Additional supervisors might be necessary when performing “simultaneous operations”.
- Thirdly, as for the activity being done at the time of the injury, there was no real need to try and remove the mud while running the drill string into the hole. The reason for removing mud from the drill string is to prevent it from falling to the floor while the pipe is standing in the derrick. This activity should be done coming out of the hole -- if the pipe is not rotating.

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**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 August 2006