



# Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

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ALERT 09 – 30

## MTO—STRUCK BY THE TONGS

### WHAT HAPPENED:

The drill crew had made up a joint of 6-5/8” drill pipe. They then attempted to torque the connection using the bottom tong to apply the torque and the top tong was used for backup. The bottom tong was placed improperly and was biting on the hard banding. At about 5,000-ft. lbs. of torque, the bottom tong broke loose from its bite and struck the employee on his left thigh. This resulted in a medical treatment case.

### WHAT CAUSED IT:

Several things stand out in this incident:

1. The tongs were allowed to be placed on the hard banding.
2. The employee was standing in a danger zone (swing path of the tong) while the tong was being pulled on.
3. The drill crew members participating in the procedure did not speak up to stop the job.
4. The concept of spotting and addressing unsafe acts is a basic element of using the rig’s behavior based safety awareness program.
5. It was determined that rig crews need additional training on when and how to address a situation where someone is committing an unsafe act.
6. It was also discovered that the drill crew needed training on the proper placement of tongs.

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:** To address this incident, this company advised the rig crews in the following:

1. Even the jobs that seem ordinary or simple need personnel to be alert.
2. Supervisors should never assume that everyone is standing where they should be.
3. Drill crew personnel were instructed to **LOOK** to see each time. When procedures are followed we can prevent incidents.
4. There are systems in place to prevent exposure to hazards, and a key system is the company’s behavior-based safety program. Rig personnel using the right procedures and applying the concept of observations “people talking with people” would have prevented this incident.

### Message:

**We all can recall situations where we thought to ourselves, “if I had only said something.” When you observe a potential for uncontrolled releases of energy, speak up! Everyone has the ability and responsibility to stop the job when a hazard is spotted.**

IADC Note: See IADC Alert: 03 – 03

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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.**

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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