



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 10 – 08

RABBITING TUBING WITH RIG AIR RESULTS IN AN MTO

WHAT HAPPENED:

Tubing was being laid down and “rabbited” on the pipe rack. (“Rabbit” means to run a device (small plug) through a pipe or tubing to clean or test for obstructions.) To “speed up” the operation the rig personnel decided to blow the rabbit through the tubing with rig air (120 psi). A hose was attached to the box thread protector. The rabbit went through the tubing and bumped against the pin protector on the other end. The air pressure built up and the box end protector blew off the tubing striking an employee on the knee resulting in an injury that required seven stitches.

The company previously had an identical incident where a roustabout was struck in the abdomen by the pipe protector and rabbit. This resulted in disemboweling him and shattering his hip. Eleven years later, he is still undergoing therapy for the injury.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

- Procedure for “rabbiting” was not defined.
- No pre-job safety meeting or JSA was used to help identify the risks associated with using rig air to blow the rabbit through the tubing.

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

- When changing a procedure, a safety meeting should be conducted, with the JSA reviewed and changed or a new one developed. This must take place to identify the hazards and risks present in the changed procedure.
- Air pressure applied to the total per square inch area is significant. In this case the potential pressure was approximately 1,150 pounds of force on the thread protector.
- Since the previous incident many drilling contractors in the region have developed procedures for rabbiting that includes pulling the rabbit through tubulars with a shop vacuum. There have not been any incidents using this procedure.)
- A company wide rabbiting procedure was developed that didn’t include use of rig air. This procedure and alert were shared company-wide, allowing a proactive response in each company division, ensuring “rabbiting” with rig air **is not** a part of the company’s “rabbiting” procedures.

Message: Changing a procedure should be reviewed by all involved, including supervisors.

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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