



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 01 – 41

TEMPORARY OPENING IN STAIRWAY CAUSES FATAL INCIDENT

WHAT HAPPENED:

A tank was taken out of service for repair. The scope of work included replenishing the integrity of the tank's stairs; i.e. the steps and their vertical supports. The method employed was to work from the ground to the top, removing every second step and the vertical supports so access to the tank could be maintained while the stairs were repaired. However, because of the state of the supports, the job method had to be modified and two steps in succession were removed. The hazard was recognized and the area clearly identified by way of hazard tape. Workers passed up and down safely several times past the gap in the steps. However, on the way down at the end of the second day, an employee stepped into the gap and fell to the ground. He was taken to hospital, but died a short time after arrival.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

A quick fix was used that remained in place longer than anticipated.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: The corrective actions are still being identified to address this incident, however:

Questions raised as a result of this incident are:

- How effective are the quick fixes we put in place?
- Are they adequate considering the risks?
- Were the risks communicated to all employees?
- What processes do we have in place to identify whether quick fixes are being relied upon for too long a period and to review their effectiveness?
- How adequate are our temporary barriers?

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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