



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 01-44

FALL FROM HEIGHT, FATALITY

WHAT HAPPENED:

Although this incident did not occur on a drilling rig, many rigs have similar ladders and landings. A welding supervisor fell over 9 meters (30 feet) to ground while descending from a fixed vertical hooped ladder. The welding supervisor had been carrying out routine weld inspections in preparation for a plant turnaround, prior to descending the ladder to return to grade. An eyewitness reported that the supervisor lost 3 point contact with the ladder and fell backwards through an unprotected section of ladder, hitting the handrail, pivoting over it and falling to grade. This vulnerable section of ladder between the top of the handrail and bottom of ladder guard hoops is highlighted in the photograph below.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

- The supervisor for reasons not determined did not maintain 3 point contact with the ladder.
- There was no fall protection located between the bottom of the ladder guard hoops and the top of the handrails.
- The platform landing was of insufficient breadth to contain an individual in the event of a backwards fall from height
- The potential of a fall from the unprotected area between the bottom of the ladder guard hoop and the top of the handrail had not been foreseen for this location during more than 30 years of service.



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

Messages:

- Even when guards are in place they may not be sufficient to prevent injury.
- Height is not the only consideration when assessing risk.
- Design standards do not always reduce risk to an acceptable standard (as low as reasonably practicable).
- Risk can arise through even the most routine of activities.
- Other related ladder incidents have occurred at the complex but lessons have not been applied consistently. After this accident, the site is even more committed to improve consistency of remedial actions across all operating areas in the complex.
- Safety rules for safe use of ladders have not been institutionalized across the complex. Greater emphasis, awareness and training will be given to everyday hazards, such as those identified in the use of ladders.
- Even the most routine of activities involve hazards.
- Basic occupational safety standards for older equipment should be equivalent to those expected on new plant

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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