



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 04 – 26

FALL PROTECTION DEVICES

WHAT HAPPENED:

The oil and gas industry has recently experienced several incidents involving fall protection devices. Self Retracting Life Lines (SRL) and/or Full Body Harnesses have become entangled on elevators or traveling blocks causing derrick men to be pulled down from tubing or monkey boards or as in one case the derrickman was lifted off the monkey board. Another incident occurred when the SRL was attached to the underside of the crown. The wind caused the line to extend out into the top drive rollers. As the top drive was lowered, the line pulled the derrickman down, but fortunately the line broke and the derrickman was still secured on the derrick board by the tail rope of his belly belt. All of these incidents had the potential of being more severe than the actual results of a Near Miss, Rig Incident, For Record Only, or First Aid By Professional.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

The incidents that have occurred are primarily the result of two leading contributing factors. These leading factors are the improper adjustment of positioning lanyards and/or full body harnesses, mounting location of SRL and the entanglement of the SRL line by taller than normal stands.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: To address this incident, companies involved issued the following:

- Derrickmen should adjust work-positioning lanyards to prevent entanglement of full body harnesses and SRLs with traveling blocks and elevators. Different types of elevators can be larger and elevator horns may protrude further, exposing SRL and Full Body Harnesses to possible entanglement, therefore, adjusting the positioning lanyard is critical to assure that derrickmen do not become entangled when different types of elevators are put in use. Full Body Harness chest straps should be adjusted to a snug fit to prevent entanglement in elevators. If derrick men are not able to satisfactorily adjust positioning lanyards, SRLs, and/or Full Body Harnesses, then “STOP” work and request Rig Supervisor and/or Drilling Rig Manager to assess the conditions and develop safe guards to mitigate hazards.
- Operators and drillers should maintain a continuous awareness of where the derrickman’s fall protection devices are located with relationship to traveling blocks, elevators and tubing or drill pipe. They need to be aware to factors that can create additional hazards (i.e. elevator sizes, wind conditions, and size/length of tubulars, etc). When long stands are present in the string, the rig operator/driller and derrickman must remain aware of the position of the long stands. When the long stands are handled, there must be clear communication between the driller/operator and the derrickman to ensure that the speed of the traveling block is reduced to allow the derrickman to exercise additional caution. The derrickman must be aware of the potential for long stands to snag or tangle with the SRL line and maintain proper positioning on the board to prevent this. The rig operator/driller should use a stop and latch process for long stands to allow the derrickman to confirm that his SRL line has not become snagged or entangled.
- Rig Supervisors and Drilling Rig Managers are to review the company Fall Protection Program including appropriate use, safe guards, inspection and maintenance fall protection devices with all employees. Operators and Drillers need to be reminded of the many associated hazards that confront derrickmen. Operators and Drillers are expected to take necessary safe guards to mitigate any hazard.
- Full Body Harness and SRL information is provided by the Original Equipment Manufacture (OEM) at the time of purchase and should be kept for future reference. If the OEM fall protection device information is not readily available, contact your safety field representative and request that they acquire the information.

IADC Note: See Alerts 98-25, 01-09, 04-04,

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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