



# Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

## ALERT 06 – 25

### POOR QUALITY LIGHT FIXTURE CAUSES FIRE

#### WHAT HAPPENED:

A service company employee noticed smoke coming from one of the rig camp office/sleeper. The fire started at night in an unoccupied cabin located at the rear of the Rig Manager's office where it was out of sight. The person who first observed the smoke informed the Night Rig Manager who then had the power to the cabin isolated and with the electric power safely off, he then extinguished the fire with a portable Dry Powder Fire Extinguisher. Once extinguished some ceiling material was removed to ensure there was no smoldering in the roof void which could have re-ignited the fire. Had it not been by chance that the service company employee walked by, this fire could have gone unnoticed until it was out of control.

#### WHAT CAUSED IT:

The cause of the fire was an overheating ballast (choke) until in an enclosed 240 volt 1200mm twin fluorescent light which melted/ignited the enclosure plastic before the main circuit board tripped. This is not the first case of fire caused by overheating ballast. Another fire occurred in late in 2005 in a rig store room. In addition to these two known fires, there have been over 90 ballasts have been changed out in the last 2 years.

Some of the frequent problems with these light fittings are:

- Overheating / open circuit ballasts
- Carcasses which crack / break in a matter of weeks allowing fittings to hang from cables or fall from ceiling.
- The lamp assembly retaining clips fail prematurely allowing the lamps and tray to fall on diffuser which can melt the plastic.
- In a matter of months, the foam seals seem to "vulcanize" the body to the diffuser and tear when the light is opened for inspection.
- Diffuser retaining clips which become brittle and break off.
- Drastically reduced life expectancy when mounted externally even though they are IP65 rated fittings.

These fitting are very common to Kuwait operations and it is expected they may also be used throughout the Middle East Region.



Normally used light fittings



Overheated ballast (main cause of fire)

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

- Management to agree on a standard good quality approved replacement light fixtures.
- Only those lights which have been approved by management are to be ordered.

**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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- Lights currently in place will be progressively changed out.

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