



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 00-01

SPIDER BITE

WHAT HAPPENED:

An offshore rig employee reported that he had a sore on his leg and asked for a bandage. The wound was approximately one-quarter inch (.62 cm) in diameter. He was given the bandage following confirmation that he had no other complaints. By the next day, the sore had grown to approximately one inch (2.5 cm) in diameter and was weeping a yellowish liquid. Following consultation with the medical director, the probable cause of the injury was determined to be a spider bite. The employee was placed on antibiotics to prevent any secondary infections and arrangements were made to have him evaluated at a medical facility. Following evaluation at two separate hospitals, the employee's wound was debrided and the damaged tissue was removed. The damage to the underlying tissue was so extensive that the wound required skin grafting to close.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

The cause of this injury was determined a bite from a small brown spider called the brown recluse. It is also commonly referred to as the "violin spider" or "fiddle back" due to the markings on its back which resemble an upside down violin. While investigating this incident, it was learned that the drilling contractor had two experienced two prior incidents of the same type. In all three of these cases, none of the injured employees ever saw the spider.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

In this specific case, professional exterminators were contacted to fumigate the suspected area. However, the dilemma is that there is no way to completely prevent such a small insect from climbing up into a pallet of gel, a joint of casing, or inside a cargo box. The most likely places to look are on palletized materials, inside cargo boxes and in dry, unrefrigerated storage areas on the rig. Rig workers should be cautioned to be alert for potential spiders, insects, etc. being brought aboard cargo delivered to the rig. Preventing these pests from gaining a foothold can help prevent unwanted contact with humans. Any insect bite should be immediately reported to the appropriate person for examination and possible medical treatment.

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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