



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 00-26

UNEXPECTED ANCHOR RELEASE CAUSES BROKEN LEG

WHAT HAPPENED:

The incident occurred on the deck of the vessel as they were preparing the 2nd piggyback anchor assembly for deployment. They had just finished connecting the anchor to the chain and were moving away from the work area on the deck of the vessel. The port hydraulic anchor handling jaw retracted releasing the chain. This caused a sudden jerk on the anchor, pulling the anchor down the deck and over the stern. Observers of the incident state that the anchor was off the back of the vessel within 2 seconds. The Chief Mate was struck by one of the anchor stabilizer bars as it moved down the deck. His left leg was broken just below the knee.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

The initial investigation on the system is focused on a failure of the hydraulic system. A hose burst on the open side of the hydraulic cylinder, which may have contributed to the ram retracting opening the port jaw. There may have been a failure of one of the hydraulic system valves, which leaked pressure to the close side of the cylinder. This is part of the ongoing investigation.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

- Do not consider this make of hydraulic jaw to be foolproof and that it could not fail.
- Use a secondary means of securing the anchor / chain in the event of failure.
- Review the hydraulic system for adequate controls to keep pressure locked in should a hose fail.
- Check valves should be installed on the hydraulic rams to prevent pressure loss in event of hose rupture.

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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