Safety Alert

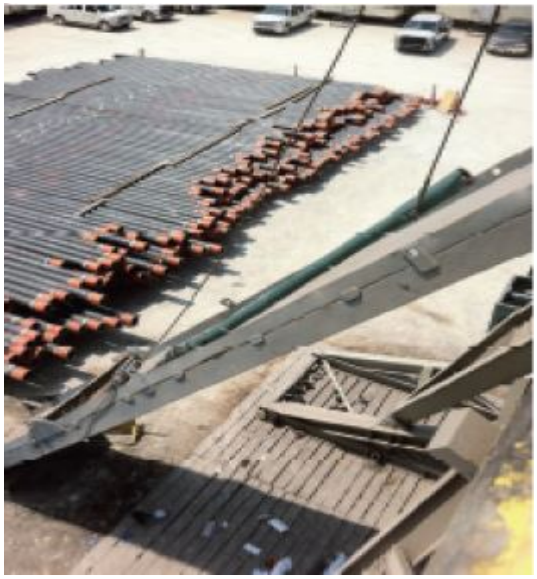
From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 14 – 05

AIR WINCH LINE CAUGHT IN DERRICK FINGERS RESULTS IN AN EMPLOYEE BEING PULLED OFF OF THE RIG FLOOR

WHAT HAPPENED:

While rigging up a fill and circulation (FAC) tool, the air winch line became trapped in the fingers on the derrick. This prevented the tool from aligning with the wellbore for installation. The tool was lowered in to the V-door to take the weight off and thus free the cable. As an employee pulled the cable free from the derrick fingers it jerked violently pulling the employee off of the rig floor. The employee was thrown approximately 10 feet (3 meters) off of the rig floor and fell striking his head on the edge of the V-door. The employee then fell another 20 feet (6 meters) to the ground.



WHAT CAUSED IT:

- Training on FAC tool rig-up and potential hazards was lacking.
- If the FAC tool needs to be laid out it must be placed on the catwalk and not the V-door stop.
- Situational awareness was a big factor. Due to the amount of people involved and the operation in progress when the accident occurred, the attention to detail should have been better. The rig floor was congested from the stand point of personnel on the floor; and drill pipe that was racked back in the derrick did impair visibility.
- The guards on the rig floor were not used when picking up equipment through the V-door.
- Speed while rigging up was an issue. The injured employee, who took the air winch line away from two other personnel, jerked it free from the derrick fingers. The potential danger had not been identified nor addressed.
- There was no verification that the air winch line was clear of the derrick fingers prior to picking up the tool.
- The drill pipe in the derrick impaired the air winch line operator's vision on the location of the air winch line.
- Improper placement of the FAC tool on the Pipe Stop on the V-door also contributed to the accident. The tool was set on the stop in a semi vertical position. An approximately 8 foot (2.4 meters) hose was on the bottom of the assembly. When the weight was taken off of the tool assembly, the hose flexed and allowed the tool to lower approximately 4 feet (1.2 meters). This action removed the slack instantly from the air winch line.

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

- The company reminded all rig personnel that if the V-door guards are not in place, fall protection should be used when working in this area.
- Through a company approved safety alert, the company communicated to all service personnel what had happened to increase awareness during this operation.
- The company instructed all drillers to verify that the air winch line is not out of position on the derrick fingers prior to picking up the tool. If the derrick finger barriers are available, they should be verified that they are in place.
- The company instituted a policy change that does not allow their personnel to operate the rigs equipment. Personnel are to only operate their company specific equipment.

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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