



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 02 – 26

FLARE LINE PILOT RESULTS IN RESERVE PIT FIRE

WHAT HAPPENED:

While circulating out a well through the gas buster the driller instructed one of the crew to check the diesel pilot light at the degasser flare line and make sure it was burning. The crewman increased the diesel flow into the barrel. While circulating the kick out of the well, the pilot light barrel overflowed spilling burning diesel into the reserve pit. The pit caught fire from residue diesel from oil based mud. Luckily, the wind was blowing away from the rig and the fire burned itself out in 30 minutes, not damaging any equipment. Even though the crew responded well to the emergency, this could have been very costly, in lives. This incident was a wake up call for the rig crews and managers.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

It is evident that the crewman did not understand either the communication or the task. Due to this the increased fuel flow to the flare line pilot barrel caused the barrel to over flow and carry the pilot flame to the reserve pit. It was noted that there is no mention of gas buster or lighting flare line in the Rig Management System.

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

- ?? Instructed Drillers to take the time to ensure crew members understand the tasks to be performed (JSA would help) but even more importantly the driller must ensure that the crew understands instructions given to them. One way is to ask them to repeat back the instructions just given to them.
- ?? One corrective action taken by the rig was to move the gas buster flare line to the other side of the flare line runway opposite of the reserve pit. They also built a dike around the pilot light diesel barrel to prevent burning diesel from escaping the area if the barrel overflows.
- ?? The rig crews held a meeting and discussed the incident, how to correctly do this task, who was assigned to do the task from this point on, and what changes in the layout had taken place.
- ?? Operations Support Group was instructed to update the Rig Management System to include operation of the gas buster and lighting procedures for the flare line pilot flame.

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.