

FATAL ALERT

June 29,2007

A drilling company with numerous years of drilling work experience, mostly in water wells, was in the process of inspecting, repairing, sand blasting and repainting an oil and gas drilling rig within their facility (yard). The drilling rig's derrick had been removed from the rig floor and laid in a horizontal position on supports about 4 feet off the ground. A crew of three employees, with numerous years of experience working on rigs was in the process lowering the monkey board/wind wall section of the derrick to a stowed position. Using a winch truck at the base of the derrick, they attached the winch's wire rope to the monkey board/wind wall section to control the descent of the monkey board/wind wall section once it reach the pivot point. The crew used a backhoe with a fork lift attachment to lift the diving board/wind wall section to the pivot point. As the monkey board/wind wall section was being lowered with the wire rope it became jammed and the wire rope became slack. Two of the employees working in the monkey board/wind wall section of derrick tried to un-jam the diving board/wind wall section.

At some point while trying to free the jammed monkey board/wind wall section one employee put himself into the pinch point area between the monkey board's pipe fingers and the hand rails associated with the monkey board. While the employee was in the pinch point zone the monkey board/wind wall section became un-jammed and free fell to its natural resting place and pinching the employee's head, which caused the fatal injury.

A contractor on site at the time of the accident indicated he saw the employees in the derrick and felt it was not safe but did not think it was his place to correct the employees.

Significant Factors:

- The employee killed had been working for the company for three months, but was considered an experienced rig hand, and the work was directed by an experienced tool pusher and all employees were considered competent to work on the derrick.
- There were no written procedures available on site for lowering the monkey board/wind wall section of the derrick.
- As the monkey board/wind wall section was being lowered it became jammed and would not move to a stowed position.
- The wire rope being used became slack and no longer supported the weight of the monkey board/wind wall section.
- While inspecting the situation the employee placed himself in a pinch point zone.
- While in the pinch point zone the monkey board/wind wall section became un-jammed and free fell to its natural resting position.
- The employee was pinched and trapping between the pipe fingers and the wind wall railing of the monkey board section and received fatal head injuries as a result.
- Blood tests done on deceased detected no drugs or alcohol.

Recommendations:

- Brief all employees on the facts and circumstances of this fatal mishap.
- Enforce the Wyoming OSHA rules relating to this type of work.
- Ensure employees are trained to recognize and avoid hazards associated with working on drilling rig derricks.
- Use the equipment owner's manuals or develop your own written procedures for lowering the monkey board/wind wall section of the derrick.
- Train workers to use the written procedure while performing maintenance on derricks.