Fatalities in the Oil and Gas Industry: Part 2



Jump-started crawler kills operator

What happened:
A 53-year-old operator decided to show another worker how to jump-start a crawler that wouldn't start (because it was in gear).

He reached into the engine compartment and used a screwdriver to bridge the electrical terminals on the starter. The machine started, but because it was in gear, it moved forward and ran over the operator, who died.

Investigation results:
Jump-starting the crawler bypasses the start-in-neutral safety device, allowing the crawler to start in gear. Normally, the safety device prevents a crawler from being started from the driver's seat when its transmission is in gear.

What's it to you:

- Never jump-start mobile equipment.
- Start and operate mobile equipment only from the driver's seat.
- Always put the transmission in park or neutral and set the brakes before starting.
- Install and maintain any labels warning against jump-starting.
- Do not remove starter shields that prevent jump-starting.

Makeshift hook kills floorman

What happened:
A makeshift hook used to pull the kelly on an oil well drilling rig released from a jam and struck a floorman on the head, killing him.

Investigation results:
While lifting the kelly in preparation for storage, the driller began to lower the kelly into the kelly sock. The hook used to pull the kelly was a makeshift hook, and as the kelly was being lowered, the line on the winch fouled and pulled the kelly into the back of the kelly sock, jamming it.

The fouled winch continued to tighten the line and the makeshift hook released, hitting the floorman on the head.

What’s it to you:

- You must follow all written safe work procedures provided by your employer and not use any other means if they create hazards.
- To employers – ensure the adequate direction of workers in the safe performance of their duties. Ensure that they work without undue risk.

Hoist line failure kills derrickman

What happened:
A derrickman was killed when a hoist line failed after the traveling block ran into the rig crown.

Investigation results:
When the line failed, the traveling block fell, hitting the worker who was in the rod basket below the rig crown. A flag, attached to the drill line, was being used as a visual aid to stop the hoist when the flag reached the drum. A visual error allowed the block to run into the rig crown.

What’s it to you:

- Do not rely on visual references.
- Install an upper travel limit device to guard against line failure.

Sit down, buckle up and live

What happened:
The driver of a water tanker died after his vehicle flipped on its side on a steep hill. He wasn’t wearing a seat belt.

Investigation results:
The vehicle was wending its way down a steeply-sloped road when the tanker began to slip. When it started to roll, the driver attempted to escape through a hatch above him. But he was crushed to death when the vehicle slipped onto its side. A follow-up check showed deterioration to the brake/steering system.

What’s it to you:

- Wear a seat belt when operating mobile equipment.
- Ensure regular inspection and maintenance of mobile equipment (by qualified people).
- Train operators of mobile equipment how to drive safely on steep slopes.