Laying Down Cut-off Casing Results in Fatality



The following is a real-life example of what went wrong and what corrective measures resulted from an incident in the oil and gas industry. It's taken from the Safety Alerts issued by the International Association of Drilling Contractors and the Canadian Petroleum Safety Council.

WHAT HAPPENED:
A cut-off joint of 9 5/8″ casing was suspended in a set of 150-ton elevators. The cut-off end rested in front of the drawworks with the blocks raised. The elevator latch was facing the drawworks while the mousehole and conductor barrel were being removed. The driller called a crewmember to the rig floor to assist in laying down the cut-off joint of casing onto the catwalk.

As the driller raised the blocks so the cut-off end cleared the rotary table, the crewman pushed the joint of casing towards the V-door. As the joint was pushed toward the V-door and the blocks were being lowered to the rig floor, the elevator door opened and the joint of casing fell to the rig floor. The worker was knocked down to the floor. Emergency response procedures were immediately initiated and emergency support arrived shortly after the incident. But the worker later died from his injuries.

WHAT CAUSED IT:
The subcontractor's 150-ton side door elevators were certified but did not have the manufacturer's safety latch lock pin in place. The manufacturer requires the use of a safety latch lock pin on all side door elevators to ensure the elevator is closed properly and cannot open.

This incident and past incident history involving this style of elevator indicates the safety latch lock pin is critical in ensuring the elevator door is properly closed and secure.

CORRECTIVE ACTION:
To address this incident, the company issued the following action items:

- Prior to the elevator being used for the operation, the supervisor must inspect the elevator to ensure that the safety latch lock pin is in place.
- The elevator must also be function-tested to ensure that the door latch, spring and safety latch locking pin operate properly.
- The inspection can be incorporated into the pre-job safety meeting prior to the start of the task.

- If the safety latch lock pin is not in place the elevator must not be used. The safety latch lock pin is the secondary method ensuring the elevator is closed properly.