



**DEPARTMENT OF MINERALS AND ENERGY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT REPORT NO. 47

INJURIES SUSTAINED WHILE WORKING ON DRILLING MAST

INCIDENT

The hair of an exploration driller was caught in the rotating drill rods of a Universal UDR-1000 drilling rig while drilling was in progress when the driller turned his head to check the control panel gauges. The rotating drill rods pulled the driller into the gap between the rotating drill string and the mast. The driller was painting the bottom of the mast of the drilling rig without wearing his safety helmet.

After having his jumper pulled from his body the driller managed to free himself. The driller received multiple injuries including hair pulled from the scalp, friction burns, lacerations and several soft tissue injuries.

CAUSE

Inappropriate work practices and procedures for working adjacent to rotating machinery.

OTHER INCIDENTS

During 191 two persons received serious injuries in separate accidents, in each case while working up the mast of a drilling rig.

In one accident the injured person lost three toes and in the other, the injuries consisted of severe lacerations to a foot.

In 1992 a drill rig offsider lost his arm when his jacket was caught by the rotating drill rods and he was dragged between the rods and the mast. This man had climbed up the mast to carry out maintenance work while the drill was operating.

PREVENTATIVE ACTION

Persons working on drilling rigs need to be made aware of the following:

- Under no circumstances should any person be on the mast of a drilling rig while the drill is operating.
- Before climbing the mast or commencing any maintenance or service work on a drilling rig, the power source must be isolated and the isolating switch tagged out with a suitable prominent danger tag, and the isolation proven.
- When a person on a drilling rig mast finds it necessary to move the drilling head or rotate the drill stem, he should vacate the mast before removing danger tags from the control switch.
- Whenever a person is working up the mast, suitable fall arrest equipment must be worn.
- Effective communications must be maintained between the driller and any person working up the mast of a drilling rig.

Note: A person on a properly designed and constructed working platform fitted to the mast may be considered as having vacated the mast for the purpose of permitting movement or rotation of the head. Persons on such a platform must wear suitable fall arrest equipment.

J M Torlach
STATE MINING ENGINEER

11 May 1994

SAFETY AWARENESS SAVES LIVES