



Petroleum Safety Significant Incident Report No. 01/2013

Fall from height incident on offshore platform

Incident

An abandonment program was underway on the platform of an offshore drilling rig. The casing strings had been removed from the platform caisson, leaving five 20 inch-diameter conductor pipes. The first of the conductor pipes was raised to the rig floor. A floorman and assisting roustabout were asked to cover the opening (slot) in the platform cellar deck left by the removal of the conductor pipe.

The workers located a hole cover about the right size and proceeded to manually move it to cover the slot. Despite being unsecured, however, the cover was being used on another opening, which was then exposed. The floorman stepped into the newly exposed opening and fell 15.5 metres into the platform caisson. He received serious but, fortunately, non-life-threatening injuries including a dislocated ankle, fractured arm, two microfractures of the spine and a fractured sternum, as well as bruises and abrasions.

Contributory factors

- Previous inspections and planned maintenance routines did not identify that the hole cover was not secured.
- No job safety analysis (JSA) or other risk assessment was undertaken for abandonment work on the platform cellar deck.
- There were no operator's drilling representatives on the platform to supervise the operation.
- Pre-fabricated covers or barriers were not available to prevent inadvertent access to new openings.
- The work area was covered in mud.

Preventative actions

This incident illustrates a failure to consider safety at all levels. Employers, supervisors and staff all missed the opportunity to identify and remove the hazard. Preventative actions include:

- conducting an audit to ensure that the safety systems in place are adequate and robust
- developing and implementing a safety management plan to cover the arrival of a rig at a platform, including the need for a "hazard hunt" each time to identify any changes
- adopting safety procedures that require platform activities to be directly controlled by a supervisor whose experience could help identify safety issues sooner.

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