



Safety Alert

Fill-Line Accident

11-5-04 updated 6-1-06

What Happened

An employee of a casing company was severely injured when a fill up line blew out of the casing it was filling and struck the employee in the face and right arm. The employee had more than 60 stitches to reconstruct his face and a broken right arm.

How did it happen?

Employees had completed running several joints of casing when they were told to fill up the casing with drilling fluids. A flexible fill-up line was produced by the drilling rig employees and the Casers were told to install it. The line was not secured. When the pressure was applied the line jumped out of the open-ended casing and struck the employee. By some accounts he was unconscious for several minutes.

Cause?

The most reasonable explanation is that the fill-up line was plugged. No one reported that the pump motors were revved before engaging the pump. However, the investigation was not conclusive.

Contributing Factors

Casing employees are forbidden to operate draw works, air hoist, and cathead on most drilling rigs. However, they are usually pressured to operate a fill-up line even though they do not supply that equipment nor do they offer that service. Somehow it is left to them by default. The cement companies used to supply this service as it is usually their equipment. It is not clear why past practices were abandoned.



What would prevent this type of accident in the future?

Properly designating job assignments and equipment responsibilities so that employees can be trained to do the job right. Also an iron clad rule that all pressurized lines be secured whether by swage or chained to the bells before engaging the pump. Additionally the employees designated as responsible for that equipment would need to be trained to make sure there are no defects (i.e. plugged lines).

Update 06

The lawsuit was finally settled for in this case for a lot less than you might think. The bottom line is it was not worth it – to the guy who got hurt or the company who was operating. **Accidents are bad business!**

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