



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region**

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Pipe Rack Finger Failure Results in Fatality and Injury

Recently, while drilling operations were being conducted, during a trip out of the hole, a pipe rack finger broke off from the derrick and fell 60+ feet to the rig floor. It struck two floor hands, killing one and injuring the other.

An MMS investigation concluded that the finger fell because of (a) the lack of a safety chain, (b) the lack of an effective maintenance, inspection, and integrity documentation program for the pipe rack fingers, and (c) the failure of the job safety analysis for pipe tripping to address adequately the potential hazard of the falling of the pipe rack finger.

The MMS recommends that operators and contractors examine pipe rack fingers on their rigs to ensure the integrity of the fingers and to ensure adequate steps have been taken to prevent them from falling in case of weld failure.

The programs for ensuring the integrity of the pipe rack fingers should include the following:

- a. Written policies and procedures for the inspection of pipe rack fingers as recommended by *API RP 4F, Appendix A*,
- b. The use of safety chains to secure pipe rack fingers,
- c. The incorporation of the potential for pipe rack finger failure in appropriate JSA's and JHA's, and
- d. The use of standard industry practice of securing stands after racking them in pipe rack fingers.

—MMS—GOMR—

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