



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

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### **Fall Through V-Door Opening Results in Fatality**

Recently, a workover rig was being erected on a platform. As the derrick was being raised by hydraulic jacks, members of the crew were guiding the heel sections of the derrick through slots in the rig floor into wells where the derrick would be pinned in place.

As the heel sections were passing through the floor slots, a gate across the V-door inadvertently opened. When the gate opened, a worker, who was apparently braced against the gate while pushing the derrick heel into place, fell backwards through the V-door opening, falling 19 feet from the rig floor to the platform level. The impact caused the death of the worker.

An MMS investigation concluded that the V-door gate was inadvertently unfastened by the worker in the normal course of work activities. The design of the Fastener for the gate allowed the inadvertent opening because of the following:

- a. The Fastener was a type that opened by simply raising a connecting mechanism;
- b. The Fastener was not latched or kept from being raised by any positive catch method;
- c. The Fastener could be raised by the clothing of a worker catching the mechanism while crouched and then his subsequently standing up.

The MMS recommends to the operators that they review the fastening mechanisms on all barriers covering handrail openings on platform or rigs. These barriers include all types of gates and chains. The MMS recommends that the operators consider installing positive latch or catch mechanisms that prevent the inadvertent opening of such barriers in the course of normal work activities.

For details of the accident, see [OCS Report MMS 2002-075](#). Copies of the report may be obtained from the MMS Public Information Office located at 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123 (1-800-200-GULF or local 504-736-2519).

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