



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

Safety Alert No. 220  
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Contact: Frank Pausina  
(504) 736-2560

### **Lifting Fatality**

Recently, drilling contractor personnel were engaged in the task of lifting bundles of 5-inch drill pipe by crane from the pipe rack to the adjacent catwalk for eventual placement on the rig floor. On the third or fourth lift, a bundle (9 joints) weighing approximately 5,760 lbs. began to swing horizontally. A drilling contractor employee, with only four days of experience offshore and in an attempt manually to stop the horizontal movement of the bundle, was pushed backward by the momentum of the bundle to a pipe rack post that prevented any farther backward movement of the employee. The bundle continued to swing and struck the employee in the chest while his back was positioned against the pipe rack post. The resulting injuries were fatal.

It was concluded, in part, in an MMS investigation of the incident that (1) the employee was not formally trained for the task, (2) his immediate supervisor was not aware of that lack of training, (3) the contractor had no policy against participation in rigging without formal rigger training, (4) the employee's previous performance problems were not properly handled, (4) no Job Safety Analysis (JSA) was performed for the task, and (5) the designated operator had no procedure for selecting contractors, did not review the contractor's safety policy, and had no clear safety directives for the company representatives on site. All of the above are considered, in varying degrees, causes of the accident.

It is therefore recommended to operators and contractors that:

- a. Lessees and Operators should review their policies regarding (1) the selection of contractors with respect to safety issues and (2) the safety performance monitoring of selected contractors.
- b. Lessees and Operators should communicate clearly and in writing what is expected of their field representatives, especially with respect to the issues of safety enforcement and monitoring.
- c. JSA's should be performed or referenced for all tasks involving hazards, regardless of the routine nature of the task.
- d. All personnel involved in rigging/lifting operations should have formal rigger training prior to participating in such operations.

For details of the accident, see [OCS Report MMS 2004-046](#). 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). The full report is also available on the MMS Gulf of Mexico OCS Region website.

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