MMS Safety Alert

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

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OCS Operations Safety Alert

Flowline Parts -- Injury

A contract pumper was injured recently while attempting to place a well on production on an offshore production platform.

He found that the wells on the platform had been shut-in by the safety system and started to put them back on production. He pressured up a well to open the subsurface safety valve and then opened the well to the flowline. The header valve was closed and the build-up of pressure caused the flowline to part near the wellhead. The pumper was either struck on the head by flying debris or was thrown against an object. He was found with head injuries about an hour later by a man from a nearby platform.

Examination of the flowline revealed that it was weakened by severe corrosion as a result of CO_2 in the produced fluid.

To prevent a recurrence of this type of accident, the operator is taking the following actions in this field:

1. X-ray, density meter, and visual inspections are being conducted and corroded parts are being replaced.

2. Corrosion inhibitor is being injected into the well fluid.

3. Wellheads and flowlines which come in contact with the CO_2 are being replaced with a heat treated alloy steel which resists CO_2 corrosion.

[signed] D.W. Solanas

Oil and Gas Supervisor

Operations Support

Gulf of Mexico Area