

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT
GULF OF MEXICO REGION

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

For Public Release

1. OCCURRED

DATE: 22-JUL-2023 TIME: 1300 HOURS

2. OPERATOR: Cox Operating, L.L.C.

REPRESENTATIVE:

TELEPHONE:

CONTRACTOR:

REPRESENTATIVE:

TELEPHONE:

- STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
- CRANE
- OTHER LIFTING
- DAMAGED/DISABLED SAFETY SYS.
- INCIDENT >\$25K
- H2S/15MIN./20PPM
- REQUIRED MUSTER
- SHUTDOWN FROM GAS RELEASE
- OTHER

3. OPERATOR/CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVE/SUPERVISOR
ON SITE AT TIME OF INCIDENT:

4. LEASE: G02445

AREA: VK LATITUDE:

BLOCK: 900 LONGITUDE:

5. PLATFORM: A

RIG NAME:

6. ACTIVITY: EXPLORATION(POE)
 DEVELOPMENT/PRODUCTION
(DOCD/POD)

7. TYPE:

INJURIES:

HISTORIC INJURY

OPERATOR CONTRACTOR

REQUIRED EVACUATION 1 5

LTA (1-3 days)

LTA (>3 days)

RW/JT (1-3 days)

RW/JT (>3 days)

FATALITY

Other Injury

POLLUTION

FIRE

EXPLOSION

LWC HISTORIC BLOWOUT

UNDERGROUND

SURFACE

DEVERTER

SURFACE EQUIPMENT FAILURE OR PROCEDURES

COLLISION HISTORIC >\$25K <=\$25K

8. OPERATION:

- PRODUCTION
- DRILLING
- WORKOVER
- COMPLETION
- HELICOPTER
- MOTOR VESSEL
- PIPELINE SEGMENT NO.
- DECOMMISSIONING
- PA PIPELINE SITE CLEARANCE
- TA PLATFORM
- OTHER

9. CAUSE:

- EQUIPMENT FAILURE
- HUMAN ERROR
- EXTERNAL DAMAGE
- SLIP/TRIP/FALL
- WEATHER RELATED
- LEAK
- UPSET H2O TREATING
- OVERBOARD DRILLING FLUID
- OTHER Management Systems

10. WATER DEPTH: 340 FT.

11. DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 18 MI.

12. WIND DIRECTION:
SPEED: M.P.H.

13. CURRENT DIRECTION:
SPEED: M.P.H.

14. SEA STATE: FT.

15. PICTURES TAKEN:

16. STATEMENT TAKEN:

INCIDENT SUMMARY:

On 22 July 2023, a fire that led to a platform abandonment occurred on Viosca Knoll (VK) 900 "A" Platform. VK 900 A is a fixed leg platform owned and operated by Cox Operating, L.L.C. (Cox), and is located 18 miles offshore in roughly 340 feet of water. Initial investigation suggest that the fire occurred when diesel from a tote tank located on the top deck, spilt onto the intake housing of the turbine compressor, located on the production deck below. Personnel on Board (POB) attempted to extinguish the fire using handheld and wheel unit fire extinguishers. Despite their firefighting efforts, the fire quickly grew beyond their control and an evacuation of the facility was ordered by the platform's Person in Charge (PIC).

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:

On 22 July 2023, at approximately 1240 hours, witnesses stated hearing "Fire" over the radio followed by the fire alarm sounding. The PIC checked the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) computer and saw that the alarm was from the #1 turbine compressor. In response, the platform's emergency shut down (ESD) system was manually initiated, and the PIC and other POB grabbed handheld fire extinguishers to fight the fire at the compressor. Flames were also observed coming from the diesel tote tanks directly above on the top deck.

The fire at the turbine compressor was eventually contained, but upstairs at the diesel tote tanks, the fire was burning out of control and quickly spread to the 8-man sleeper (DZZ-A004) nearby. POB continued using handheld and wheel unit fire extinguishers to fight the fire but were unsuccessful. After exhausting most of the fire extinguishers onboard, the PIC ordered all 6 POB to evacuate the platform.

POB made their way to the muster station and donned their personal floatation devices. Through the duration of the incident, the PIC remained in contact with the Area Foreman and transportation for the evacuation was initiated. At approximately 1320 hours, all POB safely boarded the responding Motor Vessel (M/V) Landon James and were transported to a nearby production facility (MP 296 B) where they were evaluated by the platform Medic. From there, at approximately 1500 hours, all POB were transported via helicopter to shore and taken to an onshore medical facility for further evaluation. All POB were treated and released without any restrictions.

At approximately 1330 hours, M/V Ms. Emily and M/V Mr. Cade arrived on scene and assisted extinguishing the fire using their vessel's water cannons. Both vessels remained on location until approximately 1500 hours on 23 July 2023. Cox conducted a flyover at approximately 1700 hours on 22 July 2023. No visible flames or sheens were observed coming from the facility.

BSEE INVESTIGATION:

On 22 July 2023, at approximately 1330 hours, BSEE New Orleans District (NOD) received notification from Cox that a fire resulting in evacuation occurred at VK 900 A. NOD also received a report from the National Response Center (NRC) at 1245 hours (NRC#1373854). The NRC report was from RLC helicopters stating that "A PLATFORM IS ON FIRE IN THE GULF OF MEXICO. THE CAUSE OF THE FIRE AND PLATFORM OWNER ARE OWNKNOWN. THE INCIDENT WAS DISCOVERED DURING A FLYOVER. THERE WAS NO SHEEN REPORTED".

The BSEE Office of Incident Investigation (OII) issued a preservation order to Cox at 1902 hours on 22 July 2023 to take all steps necessary to immediately identify, retain, and preserve in their present condition, all potentially relevant information

related to injuries and damage to the facility and equipment from the incident. The preservation order was lifted on 15 August 2023, giving Cox permission to begin clean-up, removal, and repair of equipment and items damaged by the fire.

On 24 July 2023, BSEE received witness statements provided by Cox from all POB.

Due to unfavorable weather conditions, the BSEE Accident Investigators (AI) were unable to conduct an onsite investigation until 25 July 2023. While on location, investigators surveyed the #1 Turbine Compressor area, took photos, and attempted to find potential ignition sources. Investigators discovered two possible ignition sources. The first was the turbine compressor exhaust, which was situated below diesel tote tanks that were stored on the top deck directly above. The second was a burnt/melted wire extension cord that was connected from the 8-Man Sleeper to an electric transfer pump placed in the containment skid of the tote tank and used to transfer diesel between tanks.

On 7 August 2023, the BSEE NOD AI, accompanied by a BSEE Inspector, interviewed the first witness, a "C" Operator who was working over at VK 900 A at the time of the incident. The Operator stated that during the morning of the incident, he and another operator were tasked with transferring diesel from a day tank into an empty tote tank due to sludge found in the tank. The sludge in the day tank was causing the fuel filters on the generator powering the Firewater/Jockey Pump to clog. As a result, the Firewater/Jockey Pump was shut down at 1600 on 21 July 2023. The remaining witnesses were interviewed on 18 August 2023. While on location, investigators revisited the area where the fire occurred, took additional photos, and documented probable and contributing causes.

During the transfer of the diesel from the day tank into the tote tank, operators opened the large lid to the day tank and placed one end of the suction hose inside the tank. The other end of the hose was connected to an electric transfer pump. From there, the cap on the tote tank was removed and a discharge hose went from the transfer pump into the tote tank. An extension cord was connected to the electric transfer pump and laid across the grating, going into the 8-man sleeper where it was plugged into a receptacle. According to Cox's report, the discharge hose was removed from the tote tank and placed within the containment skid, and the suction hose was left in the day tank while operators broke for lunch. It is suspected that the vacuum created by placing the discharge hose on the grating caused a siphoning effect from the day tank, resulting in diesel spilling out and overflowing the containment skid. This caused the diesel to flow onto the hot turbine exhaust and exposed extension cord, which may have caused ignition. Evidence suggests that the extension cord running from the transfer pump to the 8-man sleeper could be another contributing cause to the incident. The extension cord going to the pump from the 8-man sleeper was laid on top of the grating. Signs of oxidation and decay were observed on the extension cord, suggesting that the cord had been stepped on while in use. It is crucial to note that the extension cord's exposed wiring could have potentially caused ignition when the diesel spilled out of the containment skid. According to a Material Data Sheet (MSD) published by ConocoPhillips, the flash point of diesel is between 125 degrees Fahrenheit to 180 degrees Fahrenheit.

BSEE requested Cox provide the Job Safety Analysis's (JSA) used for the maintenance work performed on the Firewater/Jockey Pump, the chemical transfer process, and any other JSA performed on 22 July 2023. Cox was unable to provide the requested JSA's, stating that they were "lost in the fire".

18. LIST THE PROBABLE CAUSE(S) OF ACCIDENT:

- Human Performance Error - Not aware of hazards: Personnel left the hose used for the diesel transfer and extension cord out while they broke for lunch.

19. LIST THE CONTRIBUTING CAUSE(S) OF ACCIDENT:

- Management Systems - No or inadequate hazard analysis/written job procedure: Job Safety Analysis (JSA) for the transfer of diesel was not found.

20. LIST THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

21. PROPERTY DAMAGED:

NATURE OF DAMAGE:

#1 Turbine Compressor, 8-man sleeper (DZZ-A004), platform grating, wires, tote tanks.

ESTIMATED AMOUNT (TOTAL): \$1,900,000

22. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT RECURRANCE NARRATIVE:

The BSEE New Orleans District has no recommendations for the Office of Incident Investigations at this time.

23. POSSIBLE OCS VIOLATIONS RELATED TO ACCIDENT: NO

24. SPECIFY VIOLATIONS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING. NARRATIVE:

25. DATE OF ONSITE INVESTIGATION:

28. ACCIDENT CLASSIFICATION:

25-JUL-2023

26. Investigation Team Members/Panel Members:

29. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION PANEL FORMED:

Nathan Bradley / Pierre Lanoix / Micheal Baham /

NO

OCS REPORT:

27. OPERATOR REPORT ON FILE:

30. DISTRICT SUPERVISOR:

David Trocquet

APPROVED

DATE:

01-NOV-2023