



Safety Alert No. 456

Feb. 21, 2023

Contact: bseepublicaffairs@bsee.gov

Phone: (800) 200-4853

Extreme Caution Advised During Swing Rope Transfers



View of Boat Stern Where Swing Rope Injury Has Occurred.

Personnel transfers using swing ropes and baskets present a considerable risk for offshore workers. The most recent example is a fractured foot sustained by a worker attempting to use a swing rope to board a satellite platform from a work boat. As the captain maneuvered the boat, the worker placed his foot on a bumper tire to position himself for the swing. The worker's foot slipped between the tire and the boat when the tire hit the platform, resulting in injury.

As outlined in BSEE [Safety Alert No. 331](#), issued on April 4, 2018, the inherent danger of these operations led us to recommend operators perform hazard analyses (both at the facility-level and task-level) to help mitigate these risks.

Additional swing rope incidents BSEE has reviewed since issuing Safety Alert No. 331 include:

- An employee lacerated his shin after it struck the rear of a vessel as he was completing a swing.

- An employee fell into the water between a workboat and a platform when he misjudged the distance between the boat's deck and the top of a swell during a swing rope transfer. As he made his swing, the wave shifted the boat, moving the landing area. When the employee let go of the swing rope, he fell into the water. He was quickly retrieved from the water and did not sustain injuries.

Therefore, BSEE recommends that operators and their contractors, where appropriate, do the following:

- Treat all offshore personnel transfers as stand-alone operations and conduct a formal risk assessment before a transfer occurs. A stop work authority should be initiated. If there are any concerns regarding the safety of the operation,
- Verify personnel competencies regarding the proper utilization of swing ropes on offshore assets where swing ropes are used to ensure all personnel understand and recognize the applicable safety aspects.

Because of the inherent risks involved, BSEE also recommends:

- Using alternative methods where practicable.
- Routinely ensuring the adequacy of training and competency assessments of everyone involved with personnel transfer responsibilities.
- Following IADC ["Correct Usage of Rope Swings"](#) guidelines.

Additional risk assessments and verification of vessel seaworthiness include, but are not limited to the following:

- Ensure Master has clear visibility of the transfer area directly or via closed-circuit television (CCTV).
- Ensure deck space in the transfer area is free from obstructions.
- Ensure there is clear space for vessel crew members to assist transferring personnel.
- Install non-slip deck coatings at and around the transfer location.
- Ensure functionality of personnel locator beacon (PLB) system for man overboard incidents.
- Determine ability to recover a person from the water using only the minimum number of persons onboard.

- Verify functionality of Offshore Personnel Transfer Systems (OPTS) that are installed on-board platforms and vessels for the purpose of providing safe transfer of personnel.
- Consider using gangway systems or elevated structures (Jump Box) to equalize or elevate personnel so they never have to swing upward to a vessel or platform.



Elevated Platform Structure.



Gangway Systems.

– BSEE –

A **Safety Alert** is a tool used by BSEE to inform the offshore oil and gas industry of the circumstances surrounding a potential safety issue. It also contains recommendations that could assist avoiding potential incidents on the Outer Continental Shelf.