



Safety Alert No. 461

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Recent Tagline Entanglements Result in Several High Potential Near Misses



Figure 1: Worker entangled while moving toward the Step Back Area.



Figure 2: Worker lifted with load after becoming entangled.

Since November 2022, there have been four incidents during offshore operations involving personnel becoming entangled in taglines and lifted with the load. Despite the high potential for injury surrounding the events and operations, none of the occurrences resulted in an injury. Similar situations were previously discussed in BSEE [Safety Alert 362](#), “Poor Tag Line Awareness Leads to Multiple Incidents.”

The following is a summary of each of the recent incidents involving individuals entangled in taglines:

- **January 2023:** While lifting a welding machine from the deck, a crew member moved into the Step Back Area (Figure 1) and stepped into the coiled tagline and became entangled. The crew member was able to grab the tagline while entangled and was lifted up and swung with the load approximately 20 feet off the deck (Figure 2). The Signalman relayed the crane operator to stop the lift, and the rigger and load were lowered to the deck.
- **December 2022:** After backloading a bundle of pipe onto a motor vessel, a deckhand attached the taglines to the crane hook to send up to the platform. When the taglines were lifted, he became entangled in the lines and was lifted

approximately 3-5 feet above the deck onto a bundle of pipe where he was able to free himself without injury. A safety stand-down was conducted, and the importance of tagline safety was reinforced to the crews.

- **November 2022:** After completing multiple lifts from one deck to another, crane crews were sending a bundle of taglines to the top deck when a rigger became entangled in the lines on the main deck below. The rigger was able to grab and hang onto the tagline while being lifted approximately 8-10 feet over a conex box. The flagger signaled an all-stop after seeing the rigger in the air and the crane operator was able to safely lower the rigger down without further incident.
- **November 2022:** After unhooking a load on the deck of an offshore motor vessel, a deckhand became entangled in a tagline and was lifted from the deck after the designated banksman signaled the crane operator to start the lift. When the lift began, the deckhand's leg was lifted approximately two feet off the deck, causing the deckhand to become unbalanced. Other crew members were able to support the deckhand's upper body while the crane operator lowered him down to the motor vessel deck.

Therefore, to decrease tagline-related incidents, BSEE recommends that operators and their contractors consider the following:

- Using hands-free tools instead of taglines whenever possible (e.g., push poles, etc.). If hands-free tools are not available, use taglines marketed as tangle-free or anti-tangle.
- Periodically inspecting the condition of taglines to ensure they are in adequate condition (e.g., free of knots, absent of frayed strands, etc.)
- Using taglines that are long enough to position the rigger safely away from the load, but not so long that they could snag on an obstruction during the lift.
- Not straddling a tagline or standing inside any coiled line. Ensure the tagline remains fully in front of the worker.
- Not holding taglines in a manner that they cannot be easily released. Never allow a worker to wrap taglines around their hands, arms, legs, or body.
- Not tying taglines to, or looping them around, any other equipment, material, or other taglines to help control the load.
- Wearing appropriate gloves when handling taglines.

- Utilizing boathooks to retrieve taglines near suspended loads to eliminate any line of fire hazard. If a worker loses grip and drops the tagline, do not chase it for retrieval.
- Not walking under a load to retrieve a tagline.
- Ensuring work areas are free of clutter and removing all excess debris around a load before it is hooked up for a lift. Make sure the load travel path, all workspace, and egress routes are clear before the lift begins.
- Discussing and testing communications (e.g., hand signals, radio) between the crane operator and other personnel before a lift. Agree on a signal to indicate that the taglines are free, that personnel are clear, and the load is ready to be lifted. Ensure that all personnel can quickly signal the crane operator to stop the lift.
- Discussing with personnel the expectations for taglines if a load is being delivered to your facility by boat with taglines attached.
- Ensuring taglines are laid out properly before signaling to the banksman, designated flagger, or crane operator to begin the lift. Confirm communication methods and responsibilities are understood before the lift and are maintained consistently throughout the entirety of the operation.
- Documenting potential hazards and mitigations related to tagline use in the Job Safety Analysis, such as ones listed as recommendations in this safety alert.
- Reviewing associated [Safety Alert 362](#) “Poor Tag Line Awareness Leads to Multiple Incidents.”

– 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.

Category: Crane/Lifting