



Safety Alert No. 468

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Red Zone¹ Hazards Pose Increased Risk to Personnel During Lifting Operations



IP on aft of boat entered pinch point



Load lifted, pinning IP between load and bulwarks

The offshore work environment is inherently hazardous with heavy equipment, swinging lines, complex machinery, and a myriad of other hazards posing a potential risk to personnel. Recent red zone incidents highlight the continuing safety challenges offshore lifting operations can create. Examples include:

- A rig was in the process of offloading a 65-foot basket from the deck of an offshore supply vessel when the deck hand was pinned between the load and the vessel rails (pictured above).
- A load shifted during an equipment positioning activity, causing an employee's arm to be caught between the load and handrail.

¹ "Red zone" hazards, like "line of fire" hazards, occur when a worker is in the direct path of an object if a release of energy from that object would cause the worker to be hit, struck, pinched, impaled, crushed, or caught between objects. Injuries from red zone incidents range from minor incidents, such as a pinched finger, to fatalities.

- A crane raising a junk tool weighing 3.5 tons shifted toward a worker and pushed him back into a basket that was on the deck.

These are just a few of the dangers workers routinely face when operating offshore. By simply barricading the work areas and restricting access to areas where the worker is exposed to potential harm an operator can mitigate these risks. Establishing barricades or “red zone” areas to restrict workers from entering areas where they can be in the red zone of a hazard is a recommended practice for eliminating red zone incidents.

In addition, BSEE recommends operators and their contractors, where appropriate, consider:

- Developing and enforcing all red zone rules and when possible, avoiding all areas barricaded off or designated as higher risk.
- Handling taglines with care. Taglines can become a hazard when tangled or when too close to the load. Making sure taglines are the appropriate length and only used when necessary for the job. Limiting hand placement on the load when possible.
- Using proper rigging (e.g., slings, straps, etc.) and proper lifting devices (e.g., cranes, tuggers, etc.) for each specific job and verifying that they are in adequate condition.
- Being aware of the surroundings and planning an exit route should one be needed. During a lift, watching the load in case it begins to sway and never standing beneath it. Ensuring that you are not in an area where you, or any part of you, can be pinned against something. Making sure there are no obstructions in your vicinity that could be a pinch-point hazard, and always having a clear escape path.
- Constantly monitoring weather conditions. High winds and sea swells will cause increased movement of facilities, vessels, and loads. Stopping the job if the load cannot be fully controlled during heightened weather conditions.
- Avoiding complacency on the job. Offshore is a dynamic environment that must be continuously monitored to ensure safe operations, especially during lifting operations. Maintaining concentration on all tasks throughout a tour, even if monotonous at times. Speaking up at any time if you are experiencing exhaustion and need a break.
- Communicating clearly to ensure everyone is ready to begin the lift and maintaining communication throughout the lift to make sure everything is on track.

- Reviewing [Safety Alert 424](#), [Safety Alert 445](#), and [Safety Alert 446](#) for additional recommendations concerning poor body placement and lack of situational awareness.

– 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: Cranes/Lifting, Personnel Safety, Taglines