



Safety Alert No. 469

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BSEE Identifies Medical Evacuation and Emergency Hazards During Risk-Based Inspections

In January 2023, BSEE carried out a Performance-Based Risk Inspection (PBRI) for 20 production and well operation sites in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM). This included 12 production facilities and 8 well control facilities run by 15 different operators. BSEE inspectors found a considerable number of inconsistencies in the documentation and recording of injuries and illnesses. They also found several common procedural gaps and possible flaws in working practices, as well as problems with medical support and evacuation resources that could affect the emergency response capabilities of facilities operating on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). During the time period under review, there were several high-risk events and non-operational deaths in the GOM, and evacuations from offshore facilities to onshore medical facilities were delayed or couldn't happen as quickly as they should have.

As a result of the PBRI and routine inspections, BSEE inspectors found:

- It took an average of 6.8 hours, according to the evacuation reports, from the time an incident occurred to the time evacuees arrived at a medical center.
- Medical supplies for facility personnel were inadequate.
- Offshore workers didn't know where first aid kits were located or how to properly use them.
- Several emergency action plans were out of date, difficult for workers to find, and contained incorrect contact information. In some instances, the plan was only known to the person in charge, which could pose a significant risk if that person becomes incapacitated.
- Many operators could not show proof they had carried out medical emergency drills on a regular basis, even though it is a requirement.
- Several facilities had equipment obstructing high-traffic areas, creating trip hazards, blocking escape routes, and posing safety risks.

- Stokes litters were inoperable at several facilities, inconveniently located, unsuitable for hoisting during emergencies, and rarely included in drills aimed at enhancing personnel performance in realistic emergency scenarios.
- Although all facilities except one had automatic external defibrillators (AEDs), the equipment was not easily accessible, and only medical staff had been trained on proper use of AEDs.
- A few helidecks had foreign object debris, rust, and load capacity concerns. Some helidecks were too small for S-61 SAR helicopters to land.

Therefore, BSEE recommends operators and their contractors, where appropriate, consider:

- Reviewing and updating their medical evacuation procedures, confirming the accuracy of all details, including personnel information, service providers, contact phone numbers, and related data. Additionally, reiterating the contents of these plans to all personnel to guarantee preparedness in case of a medical emergency is crucial.
- Establishing a robust system for quality checks and inventory management of medical supplies on offshore facilities. This includes verifying expiration dates of all medical supplies and ensuring fully stocked medical supplies for the personnel on the facility.
- Incorporating regular training and drills for emergency procedures for the facility emergency response and control plans. Carrying out realistic scenario-based drills, following the Safety and Environmental Management Systems training program (§250.1915), is vital to practicing the emergency action plan effectively. Analyzing and critiquing each drill is crucial for addressing any weaknesses or incorrect procedures.
- Ensuring each manned OCS platform has a minimum of two primary means of escape, providing accessibility from upper levels to the water surface.
- Inspecting Stokes litters for safe hoisting capability. Including Stokes litters in emergency drills is advised. Additionally, stair evacuation chairs should be considered, as they can enhance facility safety during the transportation of disabled individuals.

- Assessing automatic external defibrillator placement and ensuring compliance with installation guidelines. Regular inspections and documenting AED status monthly are strongly recommended to confirm functionality for immediate emergency use.
- Conducting training on helideck markings and emphasizing foreign object debris identification and consequences. Qualified inspectors should regulate helideck integrity, ensuring the decks remain free of clutter and are properly maintained.
- Evaluating the probable response times for accessing medical support and developing emergency response plans accordingly given the remote locations in which offshore personnel operate.

– 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: Emergency Response, Personnel Safety