

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

For Public Release

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

1. OCCURRED

DATE: **15-MAY-2026** TIME: **0930** HOURS

2. OPERATOR: **LLOG Exploration Offshore, L.L.C.**

REPRESENTATIVE:

TELEPHONE:

CONTRACTOR: **Seadrill Americas**

REPRESENTATIVE:

TELEPHONE:

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

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

4. LEASE: **G27277**

AREA: **MC** LATITUDE: **28.46084366**

BLOCK: **503** LONGITUDE: **-89.01153316**

5. PLATFORM:

RIG NAME: **SEADRILL WEST NEPTUNE**

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

7. TYPE:

INJURIES:

☐ HISTORIC INJURY

☒ REQUIRED EVACUATION

☐ LTA (1-3 days)

☒ LTA (>3 days)

☐ RW/JT (1-3 days)

☐ RW/JT (>3 days)

☐ FATALITY

☐ Other Injury

OPERATOR

CONTRACTOR

0

1

0

1

☐ 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.
☐ OTHER
- ☐ TEMP ABAND
☐ PERM ABAND
☐ DECOM PIPELINE
☐ DECOM FACILITY
☐ SITE CLEARANCE

9. CAUSE:

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

10. WATER DEPTH: **3099** FT.

11. DISTANCE FROM SHORE: **38** MI.

12. WIND DIRECTION: **SSE**

SPEED: **12** M.P.H.

13. CURRENT DIRECTION: **N**

SPEED: **1** M.P.H.

14. SEA STATE: **0** FT.

15. PICTURES TAKEN:

16. STATEMENT TAKEN:

INCIDENT SUMMARY:

On May 15, 2026, a Seadrill Mechanic working onboard the Seadrill West Neptune contracted by LLOG Exploration Offshore LLC (LLOG), conducting operations at Mississippi Canyon 503 lease G27277, API #608174113101, was replacing a damaged base plate on a pulsation dampener that remained charged to approximately 2,000psi. While removing the retaining hardware, removal of the final bolt resulted in an uncontrolled release of stored pressure, causing the base plate and internal components to separate from the dampener body and become projectiles. The Mechanic was struck by components and sustained multiple injuries to the right upper body and right leg. The incident was reported to the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), New Orleans District on May 15, 2026, at 14:03 hours Central Daylight Time (CDT).

At the time of the investigation, Marine Minerals Administration (MMA) personnel were operating under the former Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE). Therefore, all MMA personnel referenced in this report will be identified as BSEE personnel.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:

The following sequence of events was drawn from information contained in the Seadrill West Neptune investigation report dated June 4, 2026, third-party inspection company Allrig's overhaul report dated November 2024 and associated witness statements, and indirect video evidence received by LLOG.

Prior to the incident, on November 2, 2024, Allrig, was contracted by Seadrill to perform a Mud Pump Parts Exchange & Pulsation Dampener Overhaul aboard the Sea drill West Neptune as part of the 10-year recommended preventative maintenance schedule. The mud pump pulsation dampener is a pressure vessel installed on the discharge side of the mud pump that absorbs pressure surges generated during pump operation. During the inspection, the Allrig Crew found the base plate on the "Pulsation Dampener" operating on Mud Pump 1 damaged due to mud washing with visible signs of wear on the inside of the base plate. All other maintenance items were completed by the Allrig service crew, except the base plate replacement due to "parts availability and timing", deferring the maintenance to a later date.

On May 12, 2026, the Seadrill crew aboard the Seadrill West Neptune proceeded to perform the base plate replacement while Mud Pump 1 was offline for other planned maintenance. A three-member Seadrill rig crew consisting of: Technical Section Leader (TSL), Lead Roughneck and Sr. Mechanic, was assigned the task of removing the current dampener and replacing it with a spare unit. The assigned crew successfully unbolted the damaged dampener assembly from the mud pump, hoisted it onto a cart and then sat it on the deck forward in the mud pump room. The same three-member crew then proceeded to pick up and install the spare dampener assembly, allowing the mud pump to be brought online while the crew performed the base plate replacement. When the dampener assembly was removed from the pump, the dampeners pressure gauge, located on the top of the vessel, showed it was charged with approximately 2000psi. This is the original equipment manufacturer's recommended charge pressure for normal operating. At this point, the damaged dampener remained under pressure in the mud pump room awaiting maintenance to change out the damaged base plate.

May 15, 2026, a Seadrill Mechanic, the Injured person (IP), not previously involved in the swapping of dampeners that occurred three days prior, was assigned to remove and replace the base plate. The IP, working alone, performed a JSA and began removing the base plate's retaining nuts that were holding the plate to the pulsation dampener body. At approximately 09:22 CDT the IP, standing just to the side of the base plate,

removed the final retaining bolt which allowed the release of the estimated 2000 psi pre-charge pressure. The force generated by this release, estimated in the Seadrill report to be "approximately 29,000 joules", instantly separated the internal components and base plate from the dampener body. The internal components became projectiles rapidly moving in multiple directions. The base plate, weighing approximately 123.75 pounds according to the sea drill report, traveled 14.9 feet striking the outer mud pump bulkhead pushing the steel paneling outward before coming to rest nearby. The pulsation dampener body, weighing approximately 3,150 pounds, traveled 22.9 feet in the opposite direction as the base plate coming to rest against a steel support beam.

The IP was struck by an unknown type or quantity of components discharging from the release of pressure, causing multiple injuries to the right leg and torso. No other personnel were in the area during the release of pressure. The IP notified their supervisor, the West Neptune TSL, by rig telephone, located in the mud pump room, of the situation and of the pain in the injured areas. The IP then walked to the medic unassisted for evaluation and treatment. After the assessment it was determined that the IP should be sent to shore for further in-depth evaluation. The IP was evacuated by crew change helicopter at 13:48hrs the same day. After the evaluation of the IP's injury onshore, the IP was placed in a walking boot and scheduled for further examination on May 18, 2026, with an orthopedic specialist. After receiving an MRI at the appointment, the IP was diagnosed with a fractured right tibia, torn right ACL and a fractured right rib as a result of the incident.

BSEE INVESTIGATIONS:

The BSEE investigation identified deficiencies in work planning, hazard recognition, and the availability and use of manufacturer procedures associated with the removal and maintenance of the Mud Pump 1 pulsation dampener.

Review of screenshots obtained from video footage showed that the pulsation dampener pressure gauge indicated pressure while the three-member Seadrill crew was removing the vessel from Mud Pump 1. Despite the visible indication, the dampener was removed and placed in the mud pump room without the approximately 2,000 psi pre-charge pressure being released.

The BSEE investigation determined that the base plate weighed approximately 123.75 pounds and was removed by a single individual. Seadrill's documented policy, No: DIR-00-0022 titled "House rules" Section 2.8 "MANUAL HANDLING" states:

The maximum a single person shall attempt to lift in a single straight lift is 25kg (55lbs). This weight should be reduced to 15kg (33lbs) if there is any twisting or movement above waist height.

The base plate therefore exceeded Seadrill's maximum allowable weight for a single-person lift.

The BSEE investigation determined that personnel involved in removing the dampener, as well as the IP who later attempted to replace the base plate, were not aware of and had not reviewed the OEM-recommended disassembly procedure. The Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) procedure requires system pressure and pre-charge pressure to be released and verified at zero psi before loosening the dampener cover or flange bolts. Through BSEE interviews aboard the Seadrill West Neptune, it was found that unlike most equipment serviced aboard the rig, the OEM procedure for the pulsation dampener was not available through the maintenance system, a computerized management system used to store, schedule, tack, and document maintenance activities.

BSEE Interviews further established that the initial Seadrill crew had previously replaced a mud pump pulsation dampener base plate without access to the OEM work instructions. During the initial crew's pre-job toolbox talk, personnel recognized pressure indicated on the gauge, discussed the associated stored-pressure hazard, and developed a method to safely bleed the pressure before beginning disassembly. However, the identified hazard and associated controls were not incorporated into or documented through an updated job safety alert to ensure the information was communicated to follow-on crews performing the same task. This demonstrated that the stored-pressure hazard was identifiable even in the absence of the OEM procedure, but the knowledge gained from the previous task was not effectively captured, shared, or communicated further. After removal of the Mud Pump 1 dampener, Seadrill personnel installed a spare dampener and deferred replacement of the damaged baseplate for three days. The available evidence indicates that restoring Mud Pump 1 to service was an operational priority; however, the investigation could not determine whether the decision was driven by the Seadrill crew's own perceived need to restore operations or by expectations from supervisory personnel to return the mud pump to service.

IN CONCLUSION:

The BSEE investigation determined that the stored-energy hazard associated with the approximately 2,000 psi pre-charge pressure was not adequately identified, communicated, or controlled during the removal and subsequent maintenance of the pulsation dampener. Inadequate task planning, the absence of the OEM procedure from the maintenance system, and the failure to recognize and address the visible pressure indication allowed the dampener to remain pressurized until the IP began removing the base plate. Removal of the final retaining bolt resulted in an uncontrolled release of stored energy, causing components of the dampener to become projectiles and strike the IP, resulting in a fractured right tibia, torn right ACL, and a fractured right rib.

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

- Failure to identify and control stored energy. Personnel failed to identify, release, and verify the absence of the approximately 2,000 psi pre-charge pressure before beginning disassembly of the pulsation dampener.
- Inadequate task planning and hazard assessment. The work was not adequately planned to identify the stored pressure hazard and establish the necessary controls before removal and subsequent maintenance of the pulsation dampener.
- Failure to follow OEM-recommended disassembly requirements. The pulsation dampener was removed and subsequently disassembled without following the OEM procedure requiring all system and pre-charge pressure to be relieved and verified at zero psi before loosening flange or cover bolts.

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

- Inadequate hazard recognition and communication. The visible pressure indication on the dampener gauge was not recognized and/or communicated as a stored-energy hazard requiring the vessel to be depressurized before removal and maintenance.
- Inadequate work planning for manual handling. The work was not adequately planned to account for the approximately 123.75-pound weight of the base plate or Seadrill's established manual-handling limits. Consequently, the base plate was handled by a single individual without sufficient personnel or an appropriate mechanical lifting method, increasing the individual's exposure to injury.

- Deferred maintenance and separation of the work activities. Installation of a spare dampener resulted in the base plate replacement being deferred for three days and subsequently assigned to an individual who had not participated in the original removal of the pressurized dampener, creating a break in continuity and transfer of information regarding the equipment's condition.

20. LIST THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

21. PROPERTY DAMAGED:

N/A

NATURE OF DAMAGE:

N/A

ESTIMATED AMOUNT (TOTAL):

22. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT RECCURANCE NARRATIVE:

The BSEE New Orleans District does not have any recommendations for the Office of Incident Investigations at this time.

23. POSSIBLE OCS VIOLATIONS RELATED TO ACCIDENT: YES

24. SPECIFY VIOLATIONS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING. NARRATIVE:

G110 - 30 CFR 250.107 (C)

The investigation found that the operator failed to ensure maintenance on the mud pump pulsation dampener was properly planned and performed in a safe manner. Personnel failed to identify, relieve, and verify the absence of approximately 2,000psi of stored pressure before disassembly. Although the stored-pressure hazard had been previously identified by another crew, the hazard and associated controls were not documented or communicated to future work crews. As a result, the base plate was removed while the dampener remained pressurized, causing an uncontrolled release of stored energy that struck and seriously injured a contract employee.

25. DATE OF ONSITE INVESTIGATION:

08-JUN-2026

28. ACCIDENT CLASSIFICATION:

26. Investigation Team Members/Panel Members: 29. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION PANEL FORMED:

NO

27. OPERATOR REPORT ON FILE:

OCS REPORT:

30. DISTRICT SUPERVISOR:

Brody Vial

APPROVED

DATE:

02-SEP-2026