

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE  
GULF OF MEXICO REGION  
ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT**

1. OCCURRED

DATE: **18-NOV-2007** TIME: **0630** HOURS

2. OPERATOR: **Hall-Houston Exploration II, L.P.**

REPRESENTATIVE: **Norris, John**

TELEPHONE: **(713) 395-7672**

CONTRACTOR: **HERCULES OFFSHORE DRILLING**

REPRESENTATIVE: **The 251, Hercules**

TELEPHONE: **(713) 658-1575**

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

4. LEASE: **G15740**

AREA: **GA** LATITUDE:

BLOCK: **151** LONGITUDE:

5. PLATFORM:

RIG NAME: **HERCULES 251**

6. ACTIVITY:

EXPLORATION (POE)  
 DEVELOPMENT/PRODUCTION  
(DOCD/POD)

7. TYPE:

HISTORIC INJURY  
 REQUIRED EVACUATION **2**  
 LTA (1-3 days)  
 LTA (>3 days) **1**  
 RW/JT (1-3 days)  
 RW/JT (>3 days)  
 Other Injury

FATALITY  
 POLLUTION  
 FIRE  
 EXPLOSION

LWC  HISTORIC BLOWOUT  
 UNDERGROUND  
 SURFACE  
 DEVERTER  
 SURFACE EQUIPMENT FAILURE OR PROCEDURES

COLLISION  HISTORIC  >\$25K  <=\$25K

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

6. OPERATION:

PRODUCTION  
 DRILLING  
 WORKOVER  
 COMPLETION  
 HELICOPTER  
 MOTOR VESSEL  
 PIPELINE SEGMENT NO.  
 OTHER

8. CAUSE:

EQUIPMENT FAILURE  
 HUMAN ERROR  
 EXTERNAL DAMAGE  
 SLIP/TRIP/FALL  
 WEATHER RELATED  
 LEAK  
 UPSET H2O TREATING  
 OVERBOARD DRILLING FLUID  
 OTHER **unplanned event**

9. WATER DEPTH: **54** FT.

10. DISTANCE FROM SHORE: **9** MI.

11. WIND DIRECTION: **SSW**  
SPEED: **15** M.P.H.

12. CURRENT DIRECTION:  
SPEED: M.P.H.

13. SEA STATE: **3** FT.

17. DESCRIBE IN SEQUENCE HOW ACCIDENT HAPPENED:

The third floorman, who was operating the slips, was thrown out of the way. His left shoulder and elbow were sore from the slips being ripped from his hand during the pre-mature drill pipe separation. During the onsite investigation on November 20, 2007, his injury was not reported. It was, however, reported to the Lake Jackson District on the following day. The drill pipe was stuck at 8652 feet while trying to drill through the cement plug. Jarring operations were attempted with no success. The crew then rigged up the wireline to run FreePoint inside the pipe in order to find where the stuck point was located, but were unable to get down to the bottom with FreePoint. It was believed the BHA was stuck at the bottom of the hole. The goal was to back-off the collars at 8520 feet. They pulled the wireline out, rigged up a string shot, and went back down to the bottom of the hole in order to break the connection between the two 30-foot Monel drill collars on the BHA. While the string shot was on bottom, the crew applied left-hand torque to the pipe with slips in the rotary table and captured torque with rig tongs. They tried to work the trapped torque down-hole before they set off the string shot charges at Monel tool joint. After applying the torque, and trapping and holding the torque with the rig tongs, the slips were attempted to be pulled from the rotary by three floormen, then the drill pipe pre-maturely backed off at approximately 1922 feet below the rotary. Upon this disconnection down-hole, a sudden release of torque energy caused the tongs and slips to violently twist off the drill pipe resulting in injuries to three floormen.

One floorman was struck on the side of his head by the drill pipe, causing three fractures to his skull. One fracture was behind his right ear, one was behind his right eye, and the third fracture was on the top right of his forehead. He fell straight down to the floor (face down) and was unconscious.

Another floorman was thrown forward and suffered an injury to his left hand from the violent rotation of the slips. He was also struck in the back by the rig tongs rotating off the drill pipe, but did not consider the impact to be overly severe. He sustained an injury to his index finger and torn ligaments on the back of his left hand, but had no broken bones.

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

When the left hand torque was applied to the drill pipe, the torque was not transferred down-hole to the desired location. Instead, the torque remained shallow in the hole. Then it unexpectedly backed off at a higher location (at 1922 feet), causing the violent release of energy at the rig floor. Additionally, rig personnel were in position pulling the slips when the release of energy occurred, causing drill pipe, pipe slips, and rig tongs to strike personnel.

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

20. LIST THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

21. PROPERTY DAMAGED:

NATURE OF DAMAGE:

**There was no property damage.**

ESTIMATED AMOUNT (TOTAL):

22. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT RECURRENCE NARRATIVE:

**The Lake Jackson District office recommends that contract operators re-emphasize the danger of performing fishing operations on stuck drill pipe. Specifically, the threat posed when applying left-hand torque on drill strings. When applying reverse torque, the pipe can back off at any time and at unknown depths, resulting in a violent reaction.**

23. POSSIBLE OCS VIOLATIONS RELATED TO ACCIDENT: **NO**

24. SPECIFY VIOLATIONS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING. NARRATIVE:

25. DATE OF ONSITE INVESTIGATION:

**20-NOV-2007**

26. ONSITE TEAM MEMBERS:

**Phillip Couvillion /**

29. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

PANEL FORMED: **NO**

OCS REPORT:

30. DISTRICT SUPERVISOR:

**John McCarroll**

APPROVED

DATE: **18-JAN-2008**