

SAFETY ALERT



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Dropped Riser Joint Nearly Crushes Floorhand



Drilling riser being lifted with hydraulic running tool



Riser after falling from hydraulic running tool

On 9 January 2019, a drilling contractor working on a rig in the Gulf of Mexico was lifting a riser joint with a Hydraulic Running Tool (HRT) and travel block. The riser joint disengaged from the HRT and fell to the drillfloor. Another floorhand noticed the riser falling and was able to evacuate the area prior to impact. There were no injuries to personnel reported. Damage assessment to equipment is currently ongoing.

The HRT initially appeared to lock in place above the riser joints locking profile. The HRT lock dogs were undamaged, and no shearing appears to have occurred. However, the lock dogs appear to have disengaged from the riser locking profile, or were never engaged into the locking profile, at the time of the incident. After further investigation, the lockout ring was found in the “unlocked” position, indicating the lock dogs were not fully engaged, and it was determined that the indicator rods prevented the lockout ring from moving into the locked position.

The HRT likely was not inserted into the riser joint at the required depth and the lock dogs did not engage the riser joint’s locking profile. The preliminary inquiry shows the indicator rods likely were not checked for full travel to the locked state and no confirmed attempt was made to move the lockout ring to the locked position to verify proper connection.

BSEE has records of similar incidents of dropped risers from riser lifting tools in 2017 and 2018. In each incident, no personnel were injured, but there was reportable damage to equipment impacted by the riser.

Therefore, BSEE recommends that operators consider the following:

- Ensure all personnel involved in riser installations review all manufacturer's recommended attaching and running procedures for HRTs and risers.
- Ensure designated personnel confirm that the hydraulic locking function has fully actuated with visual verification of indicator rods and manual lockout.
- Ensure the JSA, or procedure for the task of lifting the riser joint, effectively captures all applicable hazards and mitigation measures, including the confirmation that the locking function has successfully activated before continuing with the job.
- Prior to any lifts made by an HRT, all personnel on the rig floor, including the auxiliary floor, should clear the floor area.

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A **Safety Alert** is a tool used by BSEE to inform the offshore oil and gas industry of the circumstances surrounding an accident or near miss. It also contains recommendations that should help prevent the recurrence of such an incident on the Outer Continental Shelf.