

SAFETY ALERT



Safety Alert No. 420
April 26, 2021

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Employee Injures Hand in Rotating Equipment



Figure 1. Access hatch for compressor cooling fan



Figure 2. Compressor cooling fan belt, pulley, and sheave

On March 16, 2021, an operator, and a mechanic responded to a compressor and platform shut-in after hours. A vibration alarm on a compressor cooling fan caused a compressor package/unit to shut-in. The operator pulled the relay on the local panel to prevent a restart of the compressor. A mechanic opened the access hatch (Fig 1.), then climbed inside the unit while the cooling fan was turning and slowing down. The mechanic then placed his hand on the cooling fan belt (Fig 2.) and was lifted off the unit floor and pulled into a sheave. The mechanic's hand was pinched, resulting in two fractured fingers.

BSEE recommends that Operators and contractors consider the following:

- Do not enter or access rotating equipment that is still in rotation. Appropriate signage should always be posted to warn of no entry during operation.

- Review job safety analysis (JSA)¹ and Lockout/Tagout (LO/TO)² requirements for working on emergency situations and after-hours call-out work.
- Develop safe work policies and procedures in consultation with workers, and provide workers with the necessary information, training, and supervision. Require workers to follow the developed routine and non-routine safe work practices.
- All work should be conducted by fully trained, mentored, and experienced personnel.
- Consider hand safety as a line item on JSA when work involves rotating equipment or other high hand injury potential.
- Refresh the Stop Work Authority (SWA)³ practices as it applies to after-hours call-out work for employees that would normally be off tour or asleep.
- Review Permits to Work requirements for employees responding to after-hours call-out work. Re-emphasize the need to follow all protocols for JSAs, Safe Work Practices⁴, LO/TO and SWA.

¹ Job Safety Analysis (JSA) is a safety tool that can be used to define, and control hazards associated with a certain process, job, or procedure. It is a systematic examination and documentation of every task within each job to identify health and safety hazards, and the steps to control each task.

² Lockout/tag out refers to specific practices and procedures to safe-guard workers from the unexpected energization or startup of machinery and equipment, or the release of hazardous energy during service or maintenance activities.

³ Stop Work Authority (SWA) provides employees and contract workers with the responsibility and obligation to stop work when a perceived unsafe condition or behavior may result in an unwanted event.

⁴ Safe work practices are procedures adopted for carrying out specific tasks that ensures workers' exposure to hazardous situations, substances, and physical agents is controlled in a safe manner.

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.