



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region**

Notice No. 137

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OCS Operations Safety Alert

Personal Injury During Well Test

A test separator on a gas producing platform experienced a low fluid level condition and shut-in causing the well flow to switch automatically to the production separator. The operator bled the pressure off the test separator and connected a fire-water hose to clean sand out of the vessel and establish a proper fluid level. To reset the fluid level sensors the operator re-established pneumatic supply pressure from the master panel, not realizing that the selector valve on the panel was still in the test position. This supply pressure caused both the well control valve on the test header and the shutdown valve on the separator gas discharge line to open. The well flow and discharge line back pressure, both at 1040 psi, surged into the test separator and ruptured the fire-water hose which whipped back and struck a roustabout in the face, causing severe injuries.

To reduce the chance of a recurrence of this type of accident, the operator is taking the following actions:

1. Personnel shall have a safety meeting about the specific job to be done prior to maintenance operations and shall familiarize themselves with the respective safety equipment and devices.
2. Prior to operation of the control panel to test level control devices, the operator will check all valves used to isolate the pressure vessel for proper setting. If the valves used to isolate the vessel are pneumatically controlled, then the supply vessel pressure lines will be disconnected before establishing pressure to the level control devices on the vessel.

[signed] D.W. Solanas

Regional Supervisor

Rules and Production