

EDITORIALS

From the Chairman

GIVING A LIFT TO SAFETY

SAFETY STAYS OUR FIRST priority in the drilling industry. This means that we are committed to providing a safe place of work and that all our employees and contractors remain healthy and free from injury. Three better reasons to pursue safe operations could not be framed. And while our industry has a proud safety record, it is incumbent upon us to ever pursue the achievable goal of zero incidents. Complacency is the great enemy.



Claus Chur, Chairman

Lifting and mechanical handling is one area that deserves attention. Whether boat-to-rig personnel transfer, tubular

handling, crane operations or manual lifting, the potential for severe harm exists.

STARK STATISTICS

From 1998-2003, lifting and mechanical handling operations accounted for about 20 percent of all injuries on the UK Continental Shelf, according to the International Regulators Forum. Similarly, from 1998-2005, cranes on fixed platforms, MODUs and floating facilities accounted for 14 percent of all US Gulf of Mexico injuries and 16 percent of all GOM fatalities, according to the US Minerals Management Service. A Step Change review of 11 UKCS fatalities from 2000-2002 found that 7—nearly two-thirds!—were lifting related. Further, more than 25 percent of IADC-issued safety alerts relate to lifting operations.

Stark statistics, despite our vigorous efforts.

OUR DILEMMA

Our dilemma is that lifting operations are high-hazard events, yet are and will continue to be routine business on any rig in the world. With routine can come complacency. An operation performed correctly a thousand times without an accident will eventually produce an incident, perhaps a tragedy, if not properly done.

Safe lifting operations, like any other successful venture, begin with planning. Roles and responsibilities for every person involved must be clearly delineated and understood. Flagmen and banksmen must be mindful of the entire operation, rather than focus on a lone aspect of the work. Sound planning must also account for general safety in the work area, escape routes and situational awareness, rather than performing tasks by rote (complacency again!).

Training and supervision—including the training of supervisors—are vital to accomplishing and reinforcing these goals.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment is an integral and necessary part in planning any lift operation. However, one can overdo it. Overly elaborate risk assessment systems can seem to the employee as overkill for what are perceived as routine jobs. The challenge is balance. Make the assessment appropriate and effective without becoming burdensome. And remember, lifting tasks must be adequately manned. The temptation is great to move people from operations perceived as low priority (i.e., lifting) to the high-priority business end of the rig (drill floor). It is a temptation we must resist.

LIFTING AWARENESS

IADC continues to strive for enhanced safety in lifting operations through its committee operations and joint efforts with regulators. We have also convened conferences on the topic, both in Europe and North America. On 11-12 April, in conjunction with the Offshore Marine Service Association, we will convene our International Lifting and Mechanical Handling Conference in Houston. Topics will include personnel hoisting, crane certification, tubular handling and deck logistics, regulatory trends, manriding, personnel rescue and more.

It is my firm belief that we can conduct our business without harming anyone. I hope you can join us at the IADC International Lifting and Mechanical Handling Conference and help us “lift awareness to the next level.”

From the President

REACHING OUT TO THE PUBLIC

IN LAST MONTH'S editorial, IADC Chairman Claus Chur raised the question: “What can IADC and its members do to communicate a better image of the industry to the young generation? What can we, as drilling contractors, do to correct public misconceptions?”

IADC's first step in responding to this challenge is hosting an international forum of energy museum directors. There are some impressive energy museums scattered around the world. They not only have extensive exhibits reflecting the history of our industry but also educational exhibits demonstrating the present and future. Outreach and educational programs are also in place to assist public schools incorporate oil and gas exploration technology into science curricula.



Lee Hunt, President

The goal of this “International Forum of Energy Museums” is to improve dialogue and communication among the museum directors on how to more effectively interact with our industry and its various organizations in order to optimize these programs. How can the industry better support the missions of the museums? How can the museums contribute to the improvement of our industry's image by promoting truthful messages to the public, particularly to the younger generation still in school?

This forum will produce a plan of action that should make serious strides forward in responding to the Chairman's challenge.