



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 99-18

POWER TONG INCIDENT

WHAT HAPPENED:

The power tongs became stuck while tripping out of the hole. The floorman, who had his back to the driller, put his hand inside the tongs to see if he could determine the problem. The driller thought he heard the floorman call for power, and engaged the hydraulic power. The tongs rotated, severing all four fingers and the thumb of the floorman's left hand.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

1. The floorman put his hand inside the tongs while the hydraulic lines were still connected.
2. The safety guard had been removed from the tongs.
3. The tongs had not been serviced recently.
4. The driller could not see that the floorman's hands were inside the tongs.
5. The driller engaged the power without checking to see, or hear, that all was clear.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

1. The Driller should ensure that proper guarding is in place before proceeding with the job.
2. Never remove a safety guard from tongs or other equipment without first locking out the equipment and isolating all sources of power.
3. Disconnect hydraulic lines before working on tongs. Never put hands inside tongs that still have hydraulic lines connected.
4. The Driller should be aware of the position of floorman's hands when engaging power, and should sound an "all clear" prior to engaging power.
5. Check and service tongs on a regular maintenance schedule.

The Corrective Actions stated in this alert are one company's attempts to address the incident, and do not necessarily reflect the position of IADC or the IADC HSE Committee.

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