



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 06 – 22

NEAR MISS—EXPLODING BATTERY

WHAT HAPPENED:

Mechanic's helper was moving a charged battery on a two – wheeled dolly with one battery cable still connected to the battery. The cable fell and contacted the other battery post producing a direct short causing the battery to explode.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

An employee was transporting battery without removing the terminal cables creating the potential for a direct short. The proper procedure for transporting the battery was not known or understood by personnel, and supervision was inadequate. Employee was in a hurry and failed to see the hazard of not disconnecting all the cables from the battery posts.

WHAT WENT WELL:

Reporting the incident gives the entire company the opportunity to discuss how this kind of occurrence can be prevented at their job sites. Employee's eyes were somewhat protected by safety glasses, although goggles and face shields are required when handling batteries.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

To address this incident, this company instructed rig personnel in the following:

When performing any task, think about the worse thing that can go wrong. A similar incident occurred nearly two years ago. The lesson learned from the earlier incident was to protect the battery from contact by enclosing it in a covered battery box to prevent exposure to ignition sources and contact with the environment.

NOTE:

Often when carrying out simple tasks, we fail to recognize the potential hazards. Make hazard identification a part of every task you perform, even if the task is only walking down stairs or across location, or in this case, moving a battery on a dolly from point A to point B. Ask yourself, "What can go wrong?" Use total observation techniques safety observation training programs, remember BBI (check for hazards "Below, Behind, and Inside"). Consider the energy sources associated with each task, in this case of moving a battery. Chemical, electrical, gravity and motion are all energy sources present in the task. Identify all the batteries on your rig's location and review how they are being stored and managed.

Batteries can explode under normal operating conditions, such as starting an engine. They can explode when jump starting, or if they are short circuited as in this incident, or sitting in a parked vehicle or sitting on a table. Assume that any battery might explode when you least expect it and take the appropriate steps to prevent it.

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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