



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 09 – 23

LIFEBOAT INCIDENT RESULTS IN A FATALITY

BACKGROUND:

Offshore rigs or Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODU) are normally outfitted with lifeboats as a means of emergency evacuation. Since the lifeboats are lifesaving equipment, they must be maintained in a “ready to go” condition AT ALL TIMES. Regular drills along with testing of lifeboats & equipment is generally required by regulation and has been the industry-accepted means of assuring readiness of the lifeboats. Accident statistics indicate that most accidents involving lifeboats occur during drills and other maintenance activities.

WHAT HAPPENED:

A MODU launched its starboard lifeboat with a crew of seven as part of a planned drill. At the conclusion of the drill, while recovering the lifeboat, the aft hook opened inadvertently as the life-boat was hoisted close to its stowed position. The lifeboat swung onto its forward hook, with the sequential failure of that davit line also, resulting in the lifeboat and its occupants free falling approximately 65 feet into the sea. This resulted in the tragic loss of life of one crew member and in addition the six other crew members suffered various degrees of injury.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

Investigations revealed that the “On-Load” release system of the lifeboat had malfunctioned due to deterioration of some critical components of the system with age and use. The rig crew did not fully understand the way the lifeboat release system worked in order to conduct adequate checks of its mechanism and assure its integrity prior to hoisting the lifeboat back up to the rig. Some of the planned maintenance for the lifeboat and its release mechanism had not been implemented partially due to confusion on the rig between preventive maintenance, marine certification and flag state regulatory requirements. A long history and a lot of information exists within the shipping and ship owner’s domain about lifeboat accidents due to “On-Load” release system malfunction. This information had somehow not been fully shared with the Drilling Contractor community.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: To address this incident, this company did the following:

- Company Rig Managers are to immediately plan for an OEM engineer to visit all MODUs to assess the lifeboat release systems and conduct annual and 5-yearly inspection/overhaul/testing of the lifeboats and their release systems (if this inspection/overhaul has not been conducted and documented in the last six months).
- Company Maintenance Supervisors are to enforce prompt and timely implementation of approved maintenance tasks and procedures.
- Upon completion of the above inspection/overhaul, company Rig Managers are to have the OEM representative fully explain the operation of each lifeboat release system and its mechanism to respective rig crews and ensure the latest version of the operating manual is present on the MODU.
- Each MODU manager (Rig Manager) is to conduct and document a formal Risk Assessment exercise before conducting any lifeboat drills in future.
- Each MODU manager (Rig Manager) is to update preventive maintenance tasks and procedures to include the latest IMO/SOLAS regulations for lifeboats and other life saving equipment.
- Company management is to establish contacts with IMO/SOLAS, the IADC and the lifeboat OEM to permit knowledge sharing regarding marine safety regulations, updates to current regulations, alerts involving lifeboats and any equipment changes and/or modifications.

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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- In the light of this and many other serious incidents involving lifeboats, company personnel are to assess whether it may be better to move to a safer means of evacuation in the event of an emergency.

IADC Note See IMO Documents: IMO MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1 11 June 2009 MEASURES TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS WITH LIFEBOATS found at

http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D25943/1206-Rev-1.pdf

INTERIM RECOMMENDATION ON CONDITIONS FOR AUTHORIZATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR LIFEBOATS, LAUNCHING APPLIANCES AND ON-LOAD RELEASE GEAR

http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D22233/1277.pdf

GUIDELINES FOR THE FITTING AND USE OF FALL PREVENTER DEVICES (FPDs)

http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D25970/1327.pdf

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