

Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 15-03

Lifeboat Unintentionally Released Results in Two Fatalities

WHAT HAPPENED:

An Assistant Electrician and Assistant Mechanic were inside a lifeboat performing weekly preventive maintenance while a Motorman was positioned on standby outside. When the work was thought to be completed, the hang off pendants were removed with the Assistant Electrician still onboard the lifeboat. The Assistant Mechanic re-entered the lifeboat to address an unfinished maintenance task. He proceeded to the engine compartment and asked the Assistant Electrician to function the lifeboat's engine throttle. The Assistant Electrician instead pulled the lifeboat's release lever, which resulted in the release of the lifeboat hooks and the lifeboat fell 125 feet to the water. Both the Assistant Mechanic and Assistant Electrician perished from the lifeboat's fall.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

- Assistant Mechanic and Assistant Electrician performed maintenance work without the hang off pendants attached.
- Motorman observed Assistant Mechanic re-enter the lifeboat without the hang off pendants attached and did not initiate Stop Work Authority.
- Assistant Electrician operated the lifeboat hook release lever after bypassing its safeguards.
- Assistant Electrician performed mechanical duties on lifeboat without adequate training.
- Permit Issuer incorrectly appointed Assistant Electrician to the Permit Authority role.

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

- The company will update its Totally Enclosed Motor Propelled Survival Craft Standard to require installation of standardized lifeboat warning signs for entering lifeboats, and to improve the lifeboat release mechanism labeling.
- The company will update its Emergency Drills and Exercises Offshore Standard to require all personnel to receive annual lifeboat familiarization training in addition to its existing program.
- The company will update its induction and orientation process to provide additional awareness on Stop Work Authority through videos and SWA drill participation.
- The company engineering group will review the adequacy of lifeboat release mechanism safety barriers.
- The company will review its preventive maintenance program to provide additional guidelines on the inspection of the lifeboat release mechanism.
- The company will review its lifeboat work instructions and ensure the following is included:
 - No work may be performed inside the lifeboat without hang off pendants installed. The only exception is during the installation and removal of the hang off pendants.
 - A requirement to raise an energy isolation certificate for each lifeboat taken out of service including -mechanical isolation of hang off pendants with two locks.
 - Master, Chief Mate or Barge Supervisor must be assigned as Permit Authority over lifeboat work activities and must be present when attaching and removing hang off pendants.
 - At least one person performing work in the lifeboat must be a licensed Coxswain.
 - A description of all lifeboat operating controls with photos or diagrams.

Photo of lifeboat's control panel - the yellow arrow indicates the lifeboat's throttle, & the red arrow indicates its release lever.



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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Issued June 2015