

Petroleum and Gas Inspectorate

Safety Alert No. 44  
21 September 2009

## A crushing incident involving drill collars and selection of lifting elevators.

**ATTENTION:** Drill rig workers, contractors and companies involved in the industry.

### What happened?

A rig worker sustained serious injuries to his back after being struck by a falling length of drill collar while drilling a coal seam gas well.

The incident resulted in the worker being knocked to the rig floor.

The drill collar was being raised onto the rig floor in readiness for connection onto a drill bit sub and the drill bit itself. Almost in the vertical position, the drill collar slipped through the incorrectly selected set of 5½" casing elevators, bounced off the pipe handler and struck the worker, coming to rest on the hand railing.

### Safety issues identified

- The risk of storing and transporting identical looking sets of elevators in the same transport bin was not identified.
- The safe work procedure did not specifically include locating and verifying of code stampings on the individual elevators.
- Inexperience and lack of training.



Elevators in storage / transportation bin

### Recommendations

- Drilling companies must ensure that all hazards are identified in relation to their work.
- Activities and appropriate controls are identified and implemented to reduce risk to as low as reasonably practicable.
- Design/engineering controls should always be considered as a first possible control mechanism.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of this nature require more than one verification process.
- In this case the company involved has subsequently implemented a three level verification process prior to the elevators being attached onto the bail arms, including a simple colour coding system that allows visual identification of different sized elevators.



Casing elevators clamped onto a drill collar

### For further information, please contact:

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