



# Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

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ALERT 08 – 33

## INADVERTENT ACTIVATION OF CONTROL LEVER RESULTS IN SERIOUS INJURY

### WHAT HAPPENED:

The operation in progress was making-up 9 ½ drill collar lifting sub in a drill collar which was setting in the rotary table slips. A crewman was using a chain tong to tighten the lifting sub. The Rig Manager was inside the driller's cabin lowering the elevator to latch on to the lifting sub. As he reached for the joystick on the control panel, the back of his right hand brushed the rotary table speed knob resulting in the knob turning. This caused the rotary table to spin in reverse with the chain tongs on the sub. The chain tong handle struck the injured person in the left torso and threw him into the Driller's side of the drawworks, resulting in a very serious injury.

### WHAT CAUSED IT:

- When the Rig Manager reached for the joystick on the control panel, the back of his right hand brushed the rotary table speed control knob.
- Due to the lack of resistance on the rotary speed control knob, the knob easily turned, causing the rotary table to rotate in reverse.
- The "Stop" position on the Rotary Table/Stop/Top Drive switch on the chair arm was actually a "Neutral" position and does not isolate the Rotary Table throttle control.

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

- The company requested that the manufacturer the driller's chair and control console reposition the controls and install separation devices to prevent driller's hand from accidentally activating any controls. This would need to be done on both the right and left sides of the chair.
- Existing chairs are to add a plexiglass / lexan cover around the rotary control knob until such time as the control can be relocated.
- Rotary table must be isolated on the touch screen when using chain tongs to manually spin-in or spin-out tubular connections. In addition, relocate the TD lockout button to the back of the control panel to allow room for the reconfiguration of the rotary speed control. Add a RT lockout button beside the TD lockout button.
- Change RT/Stop/TD mode selector switch to a RT/TD selector switch.
- Drilling crew (including the Rig Manager, Toolpusher and Drillers) must undergo simulator training for DDC (Digital Drilling Controller).
- Create a new JSA to include locking-out rotary table when using chain tongs for making-up or breaking connections.

**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 November 2008