



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 10 – 35

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS

WHAT HAPPENED:

After attending a conference in the United States an employee flew to London then on to Dubai. When arriving in Dubai the employee noticed severe swelling in his left leg. He entered the hospital and was diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis (DVT). There have also cases of DVT reported in the oil and gas industry that have occurred when a driver(s) spent a long time driving a vehicle without taking a break.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

Deep vein thrombosis, or DVT, is a blood clot that forms in a vein deep in the body. Most deep vein clots occur in the lower leg or thigh but can form in other parts of the body. If the vein swells, the condition is called thrombophlebitis. A deep vein thrombosis can break loose and cause a serious problem in the **lung**, called a pulmonary embolism (PE), or a **heart attack** or a **stroke**. PE is a very serious condition. It can damage the lungs and other organs in the body and cause death.

Blood clots can form in your body's deep veins if:

- Damage occurs to a vein's inner lining. This damage may result from injuries caused by physical, chemical, or biological factors. Such factors include surgery, serious injury, inflammation, and an immune response.
- Blood flow is sluggish or slow. Lack of motion can cause sluggish or slow blood flow. This may occur after surgery, if you're ill and in bed for a long time, or if you're traveling for a long time in the same position (i.e., seated on a plane).
- Your blood is thicker or more likely to clot than normal. Certain inherited conditions (such as factor V Leiden) increase blood's tendency to clot. This also is true of treatment with hormone therapy or birth control pills.

Sitting still for a long time can make you more likely to get a DVT. Some medicines and disorders that increase your risk for blood clots can also lead to DVTs. Only about half of the people who have DVT have signs or symptoms. These signs and symptoms occur in the leg affected by the deep vein clot. They include:

- Swelling of the leg or along a vein in the leg
- Pain or tenderness in the leg, which you may feel only when standing or walking
- Increased warmth in the area of the leg that's swollen or in pain
- Red or discolored skin on the leg

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: To address this condition employees should:

Treatment includes medicines to ease pain and inflammation, break up clots and keep new clots from forming. Keeping the affected area raised and applying moist heat can also help.

Your risk of developing DVT while traveling is small. The risk increases if the travel time is longer than 4 hours or you have other DVT risk factors. During long trips, it may help to:

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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- Every hour and a half, walk up and down the aisles of the bus, train, or airplane. If traveling by car, stop about every hour and walk around. If you can't get up to walk around, try raising and lowering your heels while keeping your toes on the floor, then raising your toes while your heels are on the floor.
- Move your legs and flex and stretch your feet to encourage blood flow in your calves.
- Wear loose and comfortable clothing.
- Drink plenty of fluids and **avoid alcohol**.

If you are at increased risk for DVT, your doctor may recommend wearing compression stockings while traveling or taking a blood-thinning medicine before traveling.

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