

Safety Alert

BOEMRE

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management,
Regulation and Enforcement
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

Safety Alert No. 297
29 September 2011

Contact: Glynn T. Breaux
(504) 736-2560

Potable Water Pressure Tank Bladder Rupture

Recently a platform's fresh water system experienced low pressure due to the pressurized potable water pressure tank (WPT) being empty. In an effort to find the problem, the fresh water pump switches were turned off, the system isolated and the water lines depressurized. When the employee unthreaded a fitting located at the bottom of the WPT, the fitting was ejected out, causing severe facial injuries to the employee.

A BOEMRE investigation revealed the following:

- When the water system experienced low pressure, the WPT's internal bladder maintained its 60 psi manufacturer pre-charged pressure.
- A Job Safety Analysis (JSA) was completed, but the JSA only included the task for changing the filters on the fresh water system. The JSA should have included de-pressurizing the bladder prior to removal of the fitting.
- There were no WPT manufacturer manual(s) located on the facility to access information needed to service the WPT in a safe manner.
- The WPT manufacturer instructions state, "This tank is pre-pressurized and under no circumstances should the tank, fittings or connected system be disassembled prior to complete discharging of air and fluid pressure."

Therefore, the BOEMRE recommends Lessees and its contractors:

- Continue to utilize the JSA process to review site-specific detailed job steps to uncover hazards, but the JSA should be performed for the specific job tasks being undertaken.
- Do not install, operate or service a WPT if the manufacturer data manual(s) are not available. Failure to install, operate or service the WPT according to manufacturer's recommendations may cause the tank to fail resulting in fatal injury or property damage.

--BOEMRE--GOMR--
www.gomr.boemre.gov

A **Safety Alert** is a tool used by BOEMRE to inform the offshore oil and gas industry of the circumstances surrounding an accident or a near miss. It also contains recommendations that should help prevent the recurrence of such an incident on the Outer Continental Shelf.