

Safety Alert No. 307
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Lower Stairwell Step Collapses Causing Injury

An injury occurred when a contract employee was descending the mezzanine well deck area heading to the lower second deck. When the Injured Person (IP) reached the last step, the fiberglass bracing of the metal step collapsed causing the worker to fall to the deck and injure his knee.

A BSEE investigation revealed the following for the fiberglass bracing:

- The bracing supporting the step may have exceeded the manufacturer's 20-year life expectancy.
- The bracing may have deteriorated due to periodic exposure to chemicals or prolonged exposure to weather or excessive vibration.
- Unless inspected closely, the bracing appeared to be in good condition.

The onsite Lease Operator took the following steps to prevent the reoccurrence of this incident:

- Replaced the fiberglass bracing with more durable aluminum supports.
- Added diagonal and cross bracing for additional strength and support.
- Installed J-bolts to secure stairway to lower grating deck.
- Inspected similar construction on all associated facilities to verify the safety of the step bracing of all stairwells.



Therefore, BSEE recommends that Lessees, Operators and their Contractors should:

- Inspect all stairwells to determine the type of bracing that supports the steps.
- Install and maintain all fiberglass bracing as per the manufacturer's installation and maintenance recommendations.
- Schedule periodic maintenance to ensure adherence to manufacturer's recommendations with regard to fiberglass bracing.
- Take specific precautions to aging fiberglass bracing construction nearing the manufacturer's replacement recommendations.

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A **Safety Alert** is a tool used by BSEE 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.