

BSEE: A warning on tagline entanglement

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The United States Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) has published [Safety Alert 461](#) relating to recent tagline entanglements which have resulted in several High Potential near misses.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Line of fire

What happened?

BSEE notes:

“Since November 2022, there have been four incidents during offshore operations involving personnel becoming entangled in taglines and lifted with the load. Despite the high potential for injury surrounding the events and operations, none of the occurrences resulted in an injury.

“Similar situations were previously discussed in BSEE [Safety Alert 362](#), *Poor Tag Line Awareness Leads to Multiple Incidents*.”



Figure 1: Worker entangled while moving toward a “Step Back Area”



Figure 2: Worker lifted with load after becoming entangled

The following summarises some recent incidents involving individuals entangled in taglines:

- January 2023: While lifting a welding machine from the deck, a crew member moved into the Step Back Area (see Figure 1) and stepped into the coiled tagline and became entangled. The crew member was able to grab the tagline while entangled and was lifted up and swung with the load approximately 4 m off the deck (Figure 2). The Signaller relayed the crane operator to stop the lift, and the rigger and load were lowered to the deck.
- December 2022: After backloading a bundle of pipe onto a vessel, a deckhand attached the taglines to the crane hook to send up to the platform. When the taglines were lifted, he became entangled in the lines and was lifted approximately 1 m above the deck onto a bundle of pipe where he was able to free himself without injury. A safety stand-down was conducted, and the importance of tagline safety was reinforced to the crews.
- November 2022: After completing multiple lifts from one deck to another, crane crews were sending a bundle of taglines to the top deck when a rigger became entangled in the lines on the main deck below. The rigger was able to grab and hang onto the tagline while being lifted approximately 3 m. The flagger signalled an all-stop after seeing the rigger in the air and the crane operator was able to safely lower the rigger down without further incident.
- November 2022: After unhooking a load on the deck of an offshore vessel, a deckhand became entangled in a tagline and was lifted from the deck after the designated banksman signalled the crane operator to start the lift. When the lift began, the deckhand's leg was lifted approximately 60 cm off the deck, causing the deckhand to become unbalanced. Other crew members were able to support the deckhand's upper body while the crane operator lowered him down to deck.

Actions

BSEE recommendations include:

- Using hands-free tools instead of taglines whenever possible (e.g. push poles, etc.). If hands-free tools are not available, use taglines marketed as tangle-free or anti-tangle.
- Ensure your taglines are in adequate condition (e.g., free of knots, absent of frayed strands, etc.)
- Using taglines that are long enough to position the rigger safely away from the load, but not so long that they could snag on an obstruction during the lift.
- **LINE OF FIRE:**
 - Do not straddle a tagline nor stand inside any coiled line.
 - Ensure the tagline remains where you can see it, in front of you.
 - Do not hold taglines in a manner that they cannot be easily released.
 - Do not wrap taglines around your hands, arms, legs, or body.
 - Do not secure taglines to, or loop them around, any other equipment, material, or other taglines.
 - Use boathooks to retrieve taglines near suspended loads to eliminate any line of fire hazard. If a worker loses grip and drops the tagline, do not chase it for retrieval.
 - Don't walk under a load to retrieve a tagline!
- Wear appropriate gloves when handling taglines.
- Keep the worksite tidy: ensure work areas are free of clutter and remove all excess debris around a load before it is hooked up for a lift. Make sure the load travel path, all workspace, and egress routes are clear before the lift begins.
- Discuss, agree and test communications (e.g. hand signals, radio) between the crane operator and other personnel before a lift.

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