

Unplanned stored pressure release: worker struck by gas cylinder – company fined

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The UK HSE (UK Health and Safety Executive) has fined a company for health and safety breaches after a technician was struck by a cylinder and left severely injured on the Brent Delta offshore installation.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Line of fire

What happened?

Technicians were required to replace a gas cylinder within a system used to extinguish fires. When one of the technicians rolled what he thought was an empty cylinder along the floor and took off the protective cap, he realised that it was a fully charged cylinder. The trigger mechanism on the cylinder was activated causing a loud bang and the instantaneous release of the cylinder contents in a white cloud of concentration. The force of the gas release caused the technician to drop the cylinder to the floor, causing a valve to shear. This resulted in both cylinder and valve becoming projectiles which struck and severely injured a second technician.

The UK HSE investigation found the company had failed to take suitable and sufficient steps to ensure risks associated with the handling of pressurised cylinders were eliminated. The company also failed to remove pressurised cylinders which were not suitable for use in a safe and secure manner, and also failed to ensure the provision of appropriate information and instruction in respect of the handling and use of energised gas cylinders.

Speaking after the hearing, the HSE inspector said:

This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

The full press release can be found on the HSE website.

Members may wish to review incidents relating to failed pillar valves, threads and other failures leading to unplanned release of gas.

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