



Significant Incident Report No. 246

Subject: Fall from height during helicopter lifting operations

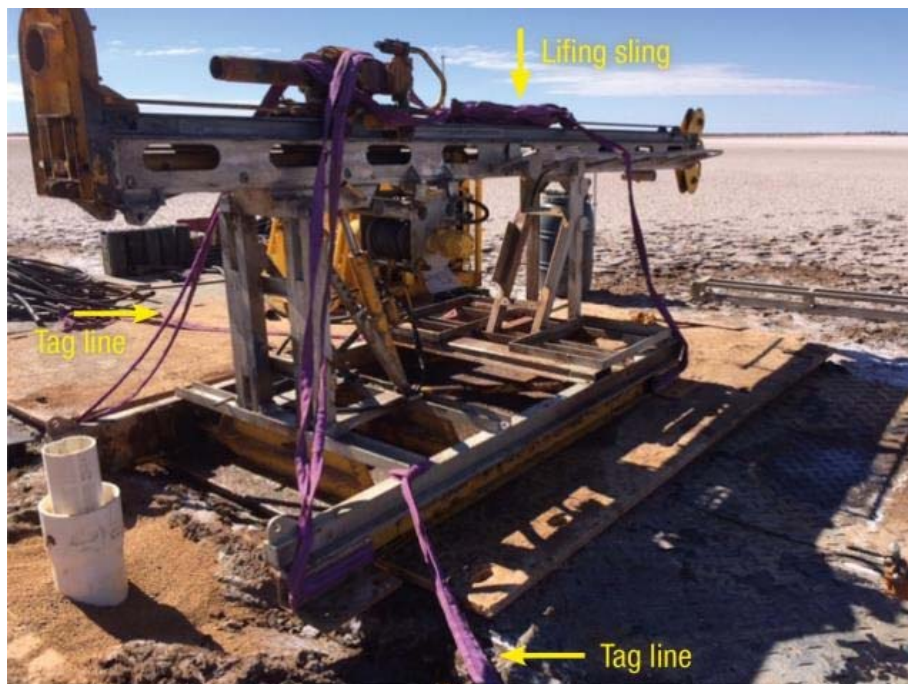
Date: 18 August 2016

Summary of incident

Note: The Department of Mines and Petroleum's investigation is ongoing. The information contained in this significant incident report is based on materials received, knowledge and understanding at the time of writing.

In May 2016, during a helicopter lifting operation to relocate a drill rig on a salt lake, two drill offsiders attached fibre loop slings to the corners of the drill rig base by looping them around the frame. Two fibre loop slings were then attached to opposite corners of the rig's base for use as tag lines by the drill offsiders.

As the helicopter lifted the rig, an offsider's leg became entangled in a tag line. He was lifted some distance before the helicopter pilot became aware of the situation. When the pilot reduced altitude to bring the offsider back to ground, he had untangled his leg and was holding on to the fibre loop sling with his arms. The offsider let go and fell 5 to 10 metres to the ground, injuring his back.



Drill rig showing four lifting slings looped around the rig's base and the two fibre loop sling used as tag lines attached to opposite corners

Direct causes

- The drill offsider's leg became caught in the tag line as the helicopter was lifting the rig.

Contributory causes

- Fibre loop slings were used as tag lines.
- Neither drill offsider held the appropriate high risk work licences for conducting dogging or rigging operations.
- The risk assessment failed to identify the potential hazards associated with the task

Actions required

Mining operations are reminded of the importance of safe systems of work and competency when undertaking helicopter lifting operations.

- Complete suitable task-based risk assessment (e.g. JHA, JSA) and have a supervisor assess as adequate prior to conducting work.
- Confirm that workers understand the task and hazards before commencing work.
- Confirm that the appropriate high risk work licences are held by persons conducting dogging and rigging operations, and that they have been assessed as competent.
- Use suitable tag lines when conducting lifting operations to avoid the possibility of entanglement with personnel or equipment.

Further information

- Department of Mines and Petroleum, What high risk work needs to be licensed?
www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Safety/What-high-risk-work-needs-to-be-6217.aspx
- Department of Mines and Petroleum, Information sheets,
www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Safety/Information-sheets-and-16176.aspx

Frequently asked questions on dogging and rigging – information sheet

This Significant Incident Report was approved for release by the State Mining Engineer on 18 August 2016