

## CRANE ACCIDENTS

### The Story

Here are summaries of a few preventable offshore fatalities involving crane accidents:

1. A crane operator on a drilling platform in the Gulf of Mexico was lifting a mud pump weighing 41,000 pounds from a barge to a location approximately 70 feet from the crane on the deck of the drilling platform. The crane did not have a rating chart posted. When the crane boom reached a position almost parallel to the deck (the pump was approximately 70 feet from the crane), the bearing unit connecting the frame of the crane to the pedestal and several bolts connecting the bearing unit to the frame sheared. The crane fell 15 feet to the deck with the operator inside. He was promptly evacuated to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The load under which the bearing unit and bolts failed was in excess of the maximum working load suggested by the manufacturer for that angle and distance.
2. A roughneck and a welder had helped transfer a sick worker to a boat for transit to shore and were returning to their platform in a personnel basket. The crane operator had raised the basket on the fast line, boomed up somewhat, and was preparing to bring the men to the platform when the basket reached a point where he could not see it because of the sun. He lowered the fast line, and the sling on the load line caught the hook on the headache ball, dropping the basket with its occupants onto the workboat. The welder suffered a broken leg and a fractured jaw. The roughneck died of a fractured skull.
3. A crane operator on a platform in the Gulf of Mexico was lifting a 100-barrel mud tank from a supply boat to the platform. The tank was partially filled with water and weighed a total of 23,000 pounds. The tank was raised to the level of the top deck of the platform but could not clear the guard rail. The operator then began to lower the load. When it was about 30 feet above the water, the hook rollers on the crane gave way, and the tank and the crane with the operator still in the cab fell into the water. At the time of failure the crane radius was estimated at 21 feet. At that radius the rated lifting capacity of the crane was 14,200 pounds.

### Lesson Learned

*The lessons to be learned are self-evident, human carelessness and failure to take simple precautions are frequently significant contributing factors to injuries and deaths.*

*Prevention Through People*



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