

## **SAFETY ALERT - #20 – 2009**

### **WORKERS BURNED BY PROPANE FURNACE LEAK**

**RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 9, 2009**

<b>Function:</b> Drilling Site	<b>Incident Date:</b> October 23, 2009
<b>Incident Type:</b> Hazard Alert	<b>Country and Region:</b> Western Canada,

#### **Summary:**

Two workers were burned, when the fuel leaking from a propane furnace was ignited.

#### **Description of Incident:**

Earlier this fall, two workers were beginning their day on a lease. They arrived on site, entered their portable trailer and turned up the thermostat in order to start the propane furnace. Shortly after adjusting the thermostat, the furnace burst into flames. As the two workers were exiting the trailer, the flames caused serious, but recoverable burns to the hands of both workers.



#### **Hazard Identification:**

The investigation, completed with the help of a third party professional fire investigator, concluded that:

1. The pilot line tubing had a small hole allowing propane to leak inside the trailer.
2. The pilot hole cover assembly was not installed at the time of the incident. Review of the Owner's Manual for the furnace identified that this cover was required for the furnace to operate properly.
3. An annual inspection of the heating system had not been completed, as required by the manufacturer.

#### **Recommendations for Preventing Future Incidents:**

Important hazard identifications and control recommendations implemented by the company following the incident included:

1. Establish an annual, third party inspection of all natural gas or propane powered trailer heaters. This annual inspection will take place prior to the furnace being used for the cooler fall/winter season.
2. Establish furnace lighting procedures / instructions and place these instructions near the furnace thermostat.
3. Revise monthly inspection of doghouse furnace to include failed items listed above.
4. Complete training at safety meetings or rig visits to improve understanding of proper lighting procedures, monthly inspection requirements as well as the posting of the warning signage near the furnace.
5. Implement a Management of Change Procedure for documenting an equipment modification to ensure that proper review and authorization of the change takes place.

#### **Contact:**

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#### **DISCLAIMER:**

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