



FUELS INDUSTRY
Association of South Africa

Lessons Learnt: Confined Space Rescue





INCIDENT DESCRIPTION

As part of the annual phase shutdown, high pressure cleaning activities were scheduled inside a vessel. To enable the high-pressure cleaning, a scaffold had to be erected to provide access to the equipment inside the vessel.

While the service provider teams were erecting the internal scaffold, the employee fell approximately 15 meters from the scaffold to the bottom of the vessel. It is confirmed that the employee had his safety harness on but was untethered at the time of the incident.



INCIDENT ROOT CAUSE

- Not following procedure: Always adhere to the 100% tie-on principle when working at heights where there is a risk of falling.



THE POSITIVE POINTS

- **Call taking – CRA evaluated info from caller and activated Rescue team with Ambulance crews.**
- **Response time to scene was excellent.**
- **Time to patient and patient excavation, clearing of face, mouth and nose.**
- **Teamwork, personnel worked well together.**
- **Communication, verbal and non-verbal, good understanding between members**
- **Assistance from Secretary in Control Room, alleviated pressure with informing all role players**
- **Demeanor of personnel on scene, showing respect and urgency in performing tasks safely.**
- **Equipment use and availability.**
- **Safe working practices in environment and improvising when circumstances hampered operations.**
- **Support from fellow crew members post incident, especially moral support.**
- **Crowd control and scene management, only necessary persons inside area.**
- **Incident mitigation actions were successful, no double work required, and early establishment of IC eased communication**
- **Patient securing under difficult conditions and handling of patient while removing patient from vessel.**
- **Wearing and use of PPE, SCBA's only removed after air quality was confirmed.**
- **Operations, clear plan and directions to all team members.**



IMPROVEMENT POINTS

- **Initial call received as ambulance call, not rescue (plant reporting)**
- **ALS response to scene was delayed**
- **Rescue vehicle to be equipped with a ladder to aid rescue capability.**
- **Look for signs of distressed rescuers post incident and debrief where required. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder may have long term impact and Employee assistance may be required.**



INCIDENT LEARNINGS

- 100% hook on when working at heights where there is a fall risk.
- Equipment availability for confined space rescue incidents (Airline mask equipment, extended rescues).
- Rescue vehicle to be equipped with a first floor ladder for access to manholes where out of reach.



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Thank You

