If One Drop is Too Much, How About Six?

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ABSTRACT

In December 2009 and January 2010, my rig suffered six dropped object incidents. Each of the drop objects exceeded 40 Joules. While no one got hurt, it was unacceptable to our own safety culture and the client’s expectation. We had to improve and do it fast.

Before discussing how this was managed, we need to briefly discuss the six dropped object incidents, their root causes and actions implemented. Then we will discuss a method used to get the attention of the rig hands and get a sense of the urgency to change.

In my company, Maersk Drilling USA, we consider a dropped object anything of weight falling from a fixed position to a place of rest. A dropped object over 40 joules is considered to have the energy to hurt, maim or kill a person. An object weighing one kilo dropped from five meters will generate 49 Joules of energy. Imagine dropping a bag of apples from five meters; you could really hurt someone. If you weigh 100 kilos and drop one meter you will generate 981 Joules. That will leave a mark.

Examination of six dropped objects.
Discussion of findings; common and uncommon findings based on root cause analysis.
Discussion of the Potential Dropped Object campaign introduced February 2010.
Effects of observation card reporting on potential dropped objects.