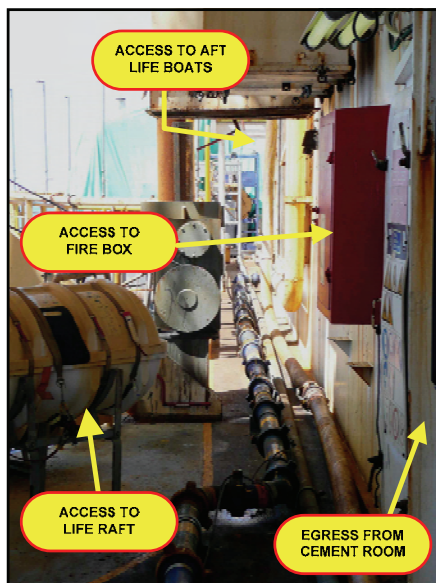


Maintaining Clear Walkways and Escape Routes

What happened?

During a recent inspection of a facility conducting well testing operations, a number of temporary flow-lines were found to be run along designated escape routes, blocking access and egress to a number of critical areas. Access to emergency response equipment such as life boats, life rafts and portable fire fighting equipment was restricted.



Figures 1 & 2 – Flow lines run along designated escape routes

In addition, during a coiled tubing operation, equipment was welded in place over a number of designated walkways, posing a hazard, particularly in the event of an emergency.

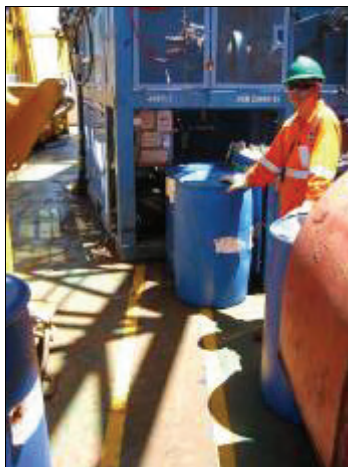


Figure 3 – Drum storage in escape route

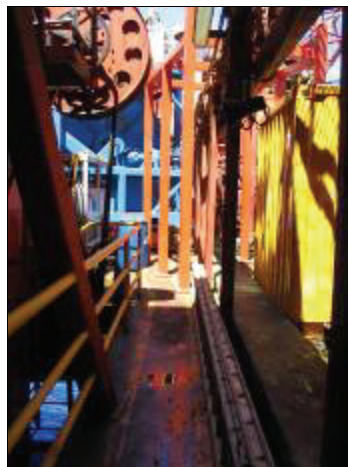


Figure 4 – Equipment installed in walkway



Figure 5 – Equipment placed on designated escape route

Maintaining Clear Walkways and Escape Routes

Another trend causing concern is the number of NOPSA planned inspections that have found escape hatches, typically from warehouses or stores, to be locked or even padlocked.

What could go wrong?

Blocking access to regular walkways and designated escape routes hinders the escape and rescue of people during an emergency. While most of the obstacles shown in these photographs could be avoided by an agile person under typical conditions, emergencies often can give rise to atypical conditions such as poor visibility due to smoke and disorientation. Escape routes must also be maintained so that they can be used by stretcher parties or firefighters wearing fire-suits and self contained breathing apparatus.

In addition, the blocking of walkways prevents the use of trolleys for moving material around the rig, tempting people to man-handle heavy items over or around obstacles. This can increase the risk of manual handling related incidents and injuries.

Key Lessons

Walk-ways and escape routes are there for a good reason – keep them clear.

Frequent and focused area inspections are required to ensure walkways and escape routes are not blocked.

Plans for installation of temporary equipment must take into consideration existing safety arrangements. Operators of facilities should also ensure their clients take the need for clear walkways and escape routes into consideration when designing installation plans for temporary equipment.

Who is responsible?

- (i) The operator of an offshore facility has general duties under the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* to ensure all work and activities are safe and the risk to people is as low as reasonably practicable. Specifically, the operator must take all reasonably practicable steps to provide and maintain a physical environment that is safe, including in the event of an emergency.
- (ii) Any titleholder and service contractor who is in control of any part of a facility, or any particular work carried out at a facility, has similar duties to those of the operator for that part of the facility or that particular work activity.

Contact

For further information email alerts@nopsa.gov.au and quote Alert 32.