Step Change Safety Alert Template

Alert Title

Hydrocarbon release from atmospheric vent when blowing down annulus

Incident Date

07/07/2013

Location Type

Fixed Platform

Specific Equipment Involved

Annulus blow down into hazardous sump.

Description of What Happened

As part of TAR activities the closed drains were isolated for RV maintenance on the metering package.

During the TAR, annulus blow downs were required and it was identified that the usual blow down route was isolated for PSV replacement. A hose was rigged from M6 to the hazardous sump vessel to provide a draining and blow down facility.

Post TAR, on 7th July it was observed that FA15 'A' annulus required to be blown down. An operator vented it through the hose, which he perceived to be the correct route. Shortly after completing venting, the GPA initiated automatically on indication of low level gas. 3 gas heads came into low level alarm and 1 head came into high alarm. They all cleared within a minute. The ERT investigated and confirmed area was clear.

Subsequent investigation revealed the gas percolated back up through the deck drains connected to the hazardous sump vessel and that post TAR the blow down hose had not been re-routed back to the closed drains once available.

Cause of Incident

It was common practice to blow down annuli without having a WCC in place, and to leave the hose charged & not walk the line prior to annulus blow down
Production team discussed the options available but failed to identify the hazard of gas release.
Draining fluids was considered a priority due to increasing annular pressure
Isolation risk assessment did not include the non-availability of the closed drains system.

Incident Consequences

Hydrocarbon release

Lessons Learned

This was considered to be a routine task and not controlled within the ISSOW system.

Recommendations/Actions

- All routine annulus blow down will be conducted under a breaking containment routine WCC.
- Ensure WCC / procedure makes clear reference not to leave hoses charged and to isolate at closed drains manifold.
- Statement on annulus blow-down to be captured on all TAR strategy documents
- Table Top exercises to be used to verify understanding and knowledge of platform drains system. “

Contact Details (Optional)

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