

HSE ALERT

“Fatal Incident Involving Inert Entry”

Incident

During a planned operation in a Refinery to remove catalyst from a reactor vessel under inert entry conditions, a specialist contractor employee was noted to have sat down after he had entered the vessel.

Standby workers raised the alarm and removed the worker from the inert environment. Standby personnel administered cardio-pulmonary resuscitation for about 40 minutes before external medical responders reached the scene and declared the worker as deceased.

Facility personnel secured the area and notified relevant officials, who have visited the scene and taken statements. An internal investigation team has been convened.

Recommendations

1. Inert entry activity is inherently hazardous and can only be undertaken by trained specialists using the proper equipment, which has been tested and approved for this purpose. In this case, although all precautions had been taken, a fatal incident still occurred. Until investigations are completed and a full post-mortem report has been provided, detailed recommendations cannot be made.
2. This tragic occurrence underlines the need for ensuring that only trained specialists in good health should be permitted to work in an inert environment, using specialised air supplied equipment. Furthermore, it underlines the need for the client OPU to ensure that specialist contractors are fully screened before awarding contracts and that the working environment is handed over in a condition that enables the contractor to safely perform the work.