

Worker Pinned Between Rig Mast Sections

Incident Date: May 11, 2018 / Location: Clairmont, AB / Industry: Drilling



AI Teaching Illustration. Shows the mast-section pinch zone during re-stringing. Positions are schematic; the exact movement that pinned the worker is not established.

What Happened

Three workers were re-stringing a drilling rig's wire rope in an equipment yard. The mast lay horizontally in two sections on metal stands. Their morning safety meeting identified pinch points, good signals and stopping if something looked wrong.

A loader pulled the line through the reeving system. A driller watched the crown sheaves and signalled the loader operator. A floorhand watched near the travelling block, beside the gap between mast sections. When the floorhand did not respond to a verbal call, the driller went over and found the worker pinned and unresponsive between the sections. CPR began and 911 was called.

Why This Became Fatal

A worker was fatally pinned in the gap between two mast sections. The published report does not establish the precise movement or sequence that closed the gap. Recognizing a pinch point must lead to a work method that keeps people clear and controls possible equipment movement.

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What Safe Looks Like

Keep people outside pinch zones and control movement before work begins.



1 Plan the Complete Task

Verify approved supports, restraints and the reeving method.

2 Keep Pinch Zones Clear

Set safe observation positions outside all movement paths.

3 Stop Before Approaching

Stop pulling, isolate and control stored energy before entry. Use agreed signals and stop if contact is lost.

AI Teaching Illustration. A pre-work hold point, not a support or restraint design. **LSR links:** Line of Fire; Energy Isolation.

Investigation Outcome

An enforcement review was completed on **February 2, 2019**. Alberta OHS determined that **prosecution or an administrative penalty were not appropriate** in the circumstances. The investigation closed on July 8, 2019. The report records no employer or supervisor conviction.

Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 Where could equipment sections, loads or components close a gap around us?
- 2 Can we monitor this task without standing in a pinch point or movement path?
- 3 What stops and secures movement before someone approaches to fix a problem?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse the task if the movement controls were unclear?

SAFETY COMES FIRST.

Your Right to Refuse – Alberta. You may refuse work you reasonably believe presents an undue hazard: a serious and immediate threat. Promptly report the refusal and reasons to your employer or supervisor. They must investigate. Contact Alberta OHS if unresolved. Take reasonable care not to endanger others. You are protected from reprisal.

Sources: [Alberta OHS investigation Report No-F-OHS-144318-DD9DB](#), pp. 2-8; summary completed July 8, 2019. [Alberta refusal guidance](#). Prepared October 19, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.

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