OIL INDUSTRY SAFETY DIRECTORATE
NOIDA

SAFETY ALERT

E & P (Onshore) 08/2018-19

Title: Fire incidents at old wells.

Location: Near oil well cellar pit.

Activity Type: Pilferage

Result / Outcome: Fire incidents.

What happened?

Two separate fire incidents were reported recently onshore wells. In the first case the fire could not be controlled by the fire engines available with the operator. After considering the seriousness a disaster was declared and fire tenders were mobilized from the town fire station to the location. The fire was doused successfully using 17 fire tenders. One well got reignited but the fire was extinguished again. The master valve of both the wells were closed. No causality was reported during the incident. One bicycle along with 50 cans of 20lts each of condensate was found near the site.

In another case, the fire was noticed by nearby operator and the same was informed to the security guard of the Oil company who then informed his Mines Manager. The Mines Manager immediately reached at the location along with his team. On inspection, he found fire has occurred in the cellar pit of the well which was shut since 2008 and not abandoned. It was noticed that the entire well head was covered in flames. The municipal authorities reached at site and using earth moving equipment the cellar pit was filled with sand available nearby and the fire could be doused. Fire tenders were delayed as the road was unapproachable. FIR's were lodged with the local police in both cases.

What caused it?

The first incident was probably a consequence of regular pilferage by miscreants. The second incident is also due to similar reasons as it was informed by the Operator that local miscreants were using the pit as for campfire which subsequently escalated in the form of well head fire.

Corrective actions:

- Wells at Old drill sites should be properly fenced.
- Regular supervision and patrolling should be ensured.
- Approach roads should be maintained properly so that fire tenders reach the site quickly.
- Surveillance gadgets like solar panel operated cameras etc. can be installed for monitoring remote wells.
- Wells not under production should be abandoned as per procedure to avoid fire risks and oil pollution.

It is provided for information purpose. This information should be evaluated to determine if it is applicable in your operation, to avoid reoccurrence of such incidents.