

## 6 tips to improve safety of rigging, lifting operations

By Martin Waite, NSL America

THE DRILLING INDUSTRY is moving through an extraordinary boom time. An industry once known for its straightforward approach to working has evolved into a highly technologically advanced and safety-conscious industry. The injuries and near-misses relating to lifting operations account for a large proportion of incidents occurring offshore.

With this in mind, NSL America offers the following tips to personnel involved in lifting operations.

**1.** The planning of a lifting operation must always be completed to ensure that all the hazards and risks have been identified and the relevant safe systems of work employed. The level of planning should reflect the complexity of the task. The lifting operation must also be appropriately supervised and carried out in a safe manner.

**2.** Personnel should have the adequate practical and theoretical knowledge and experience to plan the lifting operation. They should identify the resources required, the procedures to be followed, stipulate personnel responsibilities and include safety precautions.

**3.** Competence can only be achieved and recorded through training, experience and assessment. Lifting operations must only be carried out by competent personnel. It is essential that a competent person engaged in this work must be aware of current regulations, best industry practices and their own company procedures or safe systems of work.

NSL America issues to candidates, when requested, at the end of our Rigging and Lifting / Slings training course, a level 1 or level 2 portfolio. This contains a list of specific tasks the candidate is required to complete and record in the workplace, as evidence of their competence. The tasks recorded must be witnessed to confirm the work has been carried out safely and accurately described. The completed portfolio is then returned to NSL America for assessment and veri-



NSL America technical manager Martin Waite (back) carries out a rigging exercise with 2 students during a rigging and lifting course at NSL's Aberdeen training center.

fication, prior to a certificate of competence being awarded.

**4.** Operators using man-riding winches must be adequately trained and aware of the safe systems of work and procedures needed. Winches must be fitted with independent brakes on the hoist winch drum, overload / over-hoist protection systems, an increased factor of safety and a means to lower personnel safely, in case of power failure.

**5.** When slinging tubulars, each lift must be lifted level and slung using 2 slings of the same length and the same safe working load. The safe working load of each sling shall be equal to or greater than the gross weight of the load.

Slings should be double-wrapped and choke approximately 25% in from the ends of the load with a maximum angle, of the 2 slings, no greater than 45° from the horizontal. When applying the double wrap and choke, personnel must never push down the bite of the choke and be aware not to cross the slings on the underside of the bundle.

**6.** When personnel are required to fit taglines, they must always do so in accordance with company procedures. A tagline is a soft line used to aid in the

control of the load. When used correctly, they enable personnel to safely position themselves away from the load. However, they do have a tendency to draw personnel underneath the load, when the tagline is first used.

Many accidents are caused when the tagline is attached to the lifting equipment. It is unfortunately human nature for the handler to attach the tagline to sling, instead of applying that little bit of extra effort required to attach it correctly to the load.

As stated above, the tagline is used to aid in the control of the load. It is not designed to aid in the control of the lifting equipment. To put this point across to candidates attending our Rigging and Banksman courses, I ask, would they attach a tagline to the door handle of a container? The majority answer correctly by saying no; I then ask why, their answer being, "If we pull on the tagline, it might open the container door."

This same principle applies to the lifting equipment; if you pull on the tagline to maneuver the load, you may be very surprised to find that you have unintentionally pulled the slings from the load.

*For more information on NSL America's training courses, please visit its website at [www.nsl-america.com](http://www.nsl-america.com).*

*Martin Waite is a technical manager with NSL America.*