

Using our brains to save and improve the lives of workers

Reducing the Risk of Slipping on UK Oil & Gas, Exploration & Production Sites for BP plc



The Client

BP is one of the world's largest energy companies, with an annual turnover well over \$250 billion. They have active operations in 29 countries, employ close to 100,000 people, and produce 3.9 million barrels of oil-equivalent per day. Health and Safety is accepted as being one of their guiding principles

The Problem

BP had recently modified its footwear specification for UK onshore & offshore exploration & production sites providing close-fitting lace-up boots which gave good ankle support. However, although the new boots did help to reduce ankle injuries, staff wearing them reported some concerns about slips. HSL were therefore contracted to independently investigate the slipperiness of thereplacement footwear types and possible alternatives.



What we did

An existing test method, originally intended for the assessment of flooring slipperiness, was adapted by HSL to allow 'bespoke' testing to be undertaken. The test was designed in order to closely simulate the conditions under which the footwear would be used in practice. Open-grid industrial flooring and scaffold boards were therefore substituted for the 'standard' flooring surface in order to recreate the real working conditions, and a typical water-based contaminant, as commonly found in the offshore environment, was applied during testing.

Numerous types of proposed footwear were tested, and data was produced regarding their slipperiness in real world conditions. Subjective assessment of the comfort levels experienced by operators during testing was also fed back to BP.

Outcome/Benefits

Results of the work clearly illustrated significant performance differences between the footwear types assessed. More importantly, the information generated was specifically relevant to the conditions in which the footwear was actually to be used. This is a unique characteristic of the test method developed; it can be adapted to almost any real workplace situation.

This led BP to remove specific footwear from their 'standard issue' list. An alternative selection of footwear was identified which were both slip resistant, comfortable, and provided the level of ankle support required, and as a consequence, the risk of workplace accidents was reduced.

**"BP are appreciative of the quality of HSL's advice and the level of professionalism demonstrated during this project."
Steve Taylor, Health, Safety and Environment Manager, UK Deepwater Performance Unit.**