



HEALTH, SAFETY,
& ENVIRONMENTAL



SAFETY ALERT

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Accidental Valve Actuation and Missing Secondary Isolation Devices

Review of 2 recent incidents identified high-pressure process lines protected by only a single isolation valve where the downstream cap/plug were missing. Although the valves appeared closed and secure, accidental actuation resulted in an uncontrolled release of hydrocarbons, process fluids, or gas. Fortunately, these incidents resulted in only First Aid treatment, but they had the potential to be much more serious.

What Caused the Incidents?

Both incidents were caused by accidental contact with the valves, one by vibration with a scaling gun, the other by a worker's untucked shirt catching the valve handle.

Key Lessons Learned/Required Actions

- Never rely solely on a single closed valve as the only barrier between personnel and process pressure.
- Verify that all open-ended lines, drains, vents, sample connections, and unused process connections are equipped with the required cap, plug, blind flange, or approved secondary isolation device.
- Treat missing caps or plugs as a process safety deficiency requiring prompt correction from production personnel.
- During rounds, maintenance, and pre-job inspections (HAZ Id or L.A.W.), include verification of secondary isolation devices as part of routine checks.
- Report and correct any damaged, loose, or missing caps, plugs, blinds, locking devices, or valve position indicators to the appropriate Production Representative.
- Reinforce stop-work authority when isolation integrity is in question.

Remember

A closed valve is not always a secure barrier.

When secondary isolation devices are missing, a simple valve movement or internal valve leak can rapidly escalate into a serious process safety event. Maintaining caps, plugs, blinds, and other positive isolation methods is a critical defense against accidental releases and injuries.

Take the time to verify isolation integrity—before pressure finds the weak point.

Proper use of the **GIS LIFE Processes** can help to create a **FAIL-SAFE** Work Environment.

