**Tips for Eye, Face and Head Protection in the Oil and Gas Extraction Industry**

Contact with objects and equipment – struck-by, caught-in, caught-between -- was the second-leading cause of fatalities on land and off-shore oil and gas rigs and support activities in the United States in 2008, the most recent year fatalities in the industry were studied by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Workers can be exposed to these hazards from multiple sources, including moving vehicles and equipment, falling equipment, and high-pressure lines, according to OSHA.

Many hazards to the eyes, face and head are due to improper rigging. Loads slip and fall. The weight of loads can be misjudged. The structural integrity of lifting heavy loads can be compromised by corrosion; old equipment, slings, wiring and ropes; and exposure to harsh weather. It is critical that rigging hardware be regularly inspected. Visual, dimensional, electrical, open up and functional examinations should be conducted by a competent inspector. Rigging hardware should also be properly tested to ensure safety. Testing generally includes proof load testing to calculate the maximum capacity of the gear. Regular maintenance, including proper lubrication and repair of damaged or worn parts, is also essential.

Head protection, such as Honeywell Safety’s Everest full brim hard hats that protect against the sun’s UV rays, rain, and falling objects, is vitally important for all employees. A simple fall can lead to serious brain injury. Due to the heavy vibrations and slippery surfaces of rigs, pipes and tools can easily fall and land on workers’ heads.

Eye and face protection, such as Uvex PrecisionPro and Uvex Seismic Sealed eyewear, is also needed. Drilling and other rig activities produce flying debris. Plus, regular exposure to bright sunlight might damage or discomfort eyes, or cause glare and dangerous distractions. Welding and cutting operations are a common activity on rigs, and welders must be outfitted with appropriate welding helmets such as Fibre-Metal’s ADC Plus helmets. Employees working around high-voltage equipment require arc-rated faceshields and Class G and Class E hard hats.

Exposure to flying particles and chemical splash call for rigs to be outfitted with emergency heated eyewash stations.