

Second gas rig worker killed in Denton County

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Associated Press

Two men have been killed in as many days while working on gas well drilling rigs near Denton, authorities said.

Shawn Edward Davis, 23, was killed at about 8:20 p.m. Tuesday when he became tangled in machinery on a drilling rig about halfway between Denton and Argyle.

Davis, formerly of Sweetwater, had been working only about a week for the company that owns the rig, Republic Energy Drilling Co. of Denton, said company president Bob Lindsey. Davis had previously worked with another drilling company.

Lindsey said officials were trying to find out what happened and that he is "unbelievably sad" about his employee's death.

Donnie Ray Davis, 58, of Nocona was killed Monday on the platform of a drilling rig near Ponder when the metal hood covering a mechanical clutch flew off and hit him in the head, Denton County authorities said.

The two victims are not believed to be related, said John Looper, Denton County investigator for the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration statistics report nine oil and gas rig-related deaths in the state through September of this year.

"It is dangerous; it's probably the most dangerous part of this business, but over the years, the industry has tried to reduce those dangers, and they've been very successful, I think," said Alex Mills, president of the Texas Alliance of Energy Producers in Wichita Falls.

Dean Wingo of the Fort Worth office of OSHA agreed that accident and fatality rates are lower than they used to be in the drilling industry, which has no specific safety standards. But OSHA is targeting the industry next year in an effort to improve safety, Wingo said.

Information from: Denton Record-Chronicle

2 charged with manslaughter in drilling rig death
Associated Press

DENTON -- Two men have been charged with manslaughter after a co-worker died this week when he became tangled in the machinery on a gas well drilling rig about halfway between Denton and Argyle.

A rig worker who was not charged contacted police Wednesday after his conscience got the better of him, said Kevin Patton, Denton County Sheriff's Office spokesman.

The man told police that Louis Goodman and Teddy Garland were "horseplaying with Shawn Davis" on Tuesday evening.

Goodman of Ponder was arrested Wednesday and remained in the Denton County Jail on Thursday night in lieu of \$50,000 bail. A warrant was issued for Garland of Weatherford, but he was not yet in custody Thursday night.

One of the men attached a cable to the back of 23-year-old Davis' belt, Patton said, pulling him out of an enclosed area on the rig. Then Davis became tangled in the machinery.

The worker told police that after he returned from calling for help, the two men had removed the cable from Davis' belt, washed the blood from it and hung it back in place, Patton said.

"That's a lot different than what we heard on the night of the accident," he told the Denton Record-Chronicle for Friday's edition.

Goodman confirmed his co-worker's story, Patton said.

Davis' death was the second drilling rig fatality in the area in as many days.

Another rig worker was killed near Ponder on Monday.

Davis, formerly of Sweetwater, had been working for about a week for the company that owns the rig, Republic Energy Drilling Co. of Denton, officials with the company said.

Bob Lindsay, the company's president, said Thursday that he doesn't condone any type of horseplay. "I'm unbelievably saddened by this," he said.

Manslaughter is a second-degree felony, and if convicted, the men could face up to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.