

HANDS ON WITH JT KESLER

Tools Exist for a Reason

This column was conceived as a source for drilling expert J.T. Kesler to share his wealth of knowledge picked up over the years in the field with you, the driller. On May 3, 2006 J.T. passed away. In his 36 years with Ingersoll-Rand, then Atlas Copco, J.T. traveled the world solving drilling problems, starting up rigs and most importantly - training hundreds of drillers. He most certainly has friends and colleagues in some of the most remote corners of the world. He will be missed.

On a recent machine start-up, I noticed some of the tools shipped with the new T4W were either not being used or used incorrectly by the experienced crew.

It made me wonder how many other drillers aren't using the standard tooling because they don't know their function or how to use them.

Tools exist for a reason: to make a job safer and easier, or so the rig runs longer and more efficiently. The reason tools are not used or are misused is that the operator thinks it's quicker not to use a tool or that he doesn't understand the function of the tool and how to use it.

One lesson to remember, today's shortcut may become problem. Use the tools for their intended purpose; it will save you headaches later.

Carousel Support

The most unused tool is quite clearly the carousel support. You may think that there is no real reason to use the support…..that it's not really needed. This is definitely not the case. There is a very good reason to use the carousel support.

After a drill gets to be a few years old, some people wonder why the rotary head spindle does not line up with the pipe in the carousel any more. Lack of support over time may cause the carousel to sag. This misalignment can cause pipe thread damage and slow down the drilling operation. The carousel support tool was designed to support the carousel in the transport position and prevent misalignment.

Chain Wrench Plate

Another misunderstood or ignored tool is the chain wrench plate. Many drillers don't like to take a few seconds to install the plate. Others don't know what that curved plate with a 'V' notch in it is for. The wrench plate's sole purse is to act as a rest for the chain wrench, a.k.a breakout wrench.

Over time, you will build up extra muscle lifting the 64-pound (29 kg) chain wrench every time you use it to break a joint. You'll also be putting unnecessary strain on your back, shoulders and arms. For you young guys, it's all in a days work. For us older guys, it's common sense to use a tool that makes the job easier. Remember, 'a smart driller uses his brain instead of his back.'

Hex Fork Chuck

There are two fork chucks. The standard fork chuck fits the flats on the pin end of a T4W drill pipe. Everyone knows how to use that one. The forgotten fork chuck, the hex fork chuck, fits around the hex end (box) of the drill pipe. This handy tool secures the box end at the centralizer so you can break or make the connection at the rotary head. It's the safest way to perform this operation.

You won't need it often but it's worth it's weight when you do. The hex fork chuck isn't standard equipment with a T4W, so you'll have to order it. I recommend you have one in your toolbox.

Rod Lock

The rod locking tool is probably the most important tool during transport, because of its safety factor. With a seven-rod carousel, the locking tool locks the drill pipe into the carousel and keeps one from possibly shooting forward if you have to stand on the brakes. This is a mandatory tool that you have to use every time you lower the derrick and move the rig.

J Wrench

The "J" wrench, fits the flats on the back head and holds the back head of a down the hole (DTH) hammer allowing you to break it from the drill pipe.

There are many more tools that come standard with a new drill, but these are the most overlooked. What's important is to always use the right tool for the job and always focus on the job at hand.

Be safe out there!

J.T.Kesler

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