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BUCKINGHAM & VEGA
LAW FIRM



Dangers In The Oil Field:

*Helping Injured
Workers Hold Oil
And Gas Companies
Accountable*



As a worker in the oil and gas industry, you're no stranger to tough jobs. You're used to working long hours in all weather conditions. You may be far from home, living in a dormitory or hotel. Unlike those at a desk job, you're out there in the elements, navigating heavy machinery and powerful equipment in a loud and chaotic environment. And, you might be doing it in 12-hour shifts for days on end, including nights, weekends and overtime.



When a serious injury happens on the job, it's a big setback to not only your health but also your livelihood. You may be sidelined for weeks or months. The long road to recovery will have major financial ramifications for your future. And, if you're left with permanent disabilities, you may be unable to return to work ever again.

What are your legal options after a life-shattering injury on the job? You may be surprised to learn that in addition to a workers' compensation claim, you could have a personal injury claim. Successfully pursuing that claim can make a big difference in supporting your family and getting the care you need for the future.





Hazards In The Oil And Gas Industry

The oil and gas industry employs nearly 10 million people nationwide, accounting for 5.6% of the total workforce.¹ As the most oil-rich state in the nation, Texas is home to many of the highest-producing oil fields nationwide.² New Mexico ranks third highest for oil production, with oil and gas-related jobs comprising a significant percentage of the workforce.³



**OIL &
GAS
EMPLOYS 10M
NATION-
WIDE**



USA OIL

40%

FROM
TX & NM

The Permian Basin

Almost 40% of the nation's oil production comes from the Permian Basin in western Texas and southeastern New Mexico.⁴

While many oil and gas jobs pay well, that higher pay often comes with a price. You may be exposed to hazards every day on the job, and you face a higher risk of injury than workers in other industries.



Work-Related Oil And Gas Injuries

3.4

WORKERS IN 100:

Average rate of injuries (including fatal injuries) in the natural resources industry every year⁵



1,189

Number of oil and gas workers killed on the job between 2003 and 2013

108

Average number of oil and gas workers killed every year⁷

Upstream And Midstream Hazards

Some of the most hazardous jobs in the industry are associated with:

Drilling

Extraction

Transportation

The fatality rate for workers involved in the upstream oil and gas industry is **12.9 per 100,000**. That's more than **three-and-a-half times** the average fatality rate across all industries.⁸

Vehicle Accidents

Onshore oil and gas operations require a multitude of large, powerful vehicles, such as semi trucks, forklifts and tanker trucks. Because oil fields are accessible only via highways in rural areas, traffic accidents are a major hazard. In fact, motor vehicle accidents on highways account for the highest number of worker fatalities in the oil and gas industry.⁹



Oil and gas companies are responsible for fostering safe driving practices, including:

Hiring drivers with the right training and qualifications

Requiring regular safety training sessions

Safely mapping routes to minimize traffic hazards

Ensuring that cargo is properly secured

Providing and using effective communication systems

Maintaining vehicles in safe operating condition

Implementing automated vehicle monitoring, safety checklists and incident reporting



These horrific accidents can be catastrophic or fatal.

Motorists who aren't workers but happen to be driving through areas heavily impacted by oil and gas operations are also subject to risks on the roadways. Many oil- and gas-related accidents involve traffic collisions with nonworkers.

Equipment And Machinery-Related Accidents

Oil and gas operations require massive equipment, such as drill rigs, derricks, cranes, hoists, mud pumps, boilers and waste management equipment. A major category of oil and gas accidents involves getting caught in, crushed or struck by equipment.

Factors that contribute to these accidents include:

Improper operation

Inadequate safety measures

Lack of safety guards

Failure to provide safety training

Negligent supervision



Falls

Falls from platforms, scaffolding, ladders, lifts and other heights are another category of hazards in the oil and gas industry. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the federal agency responsible for workplace safety, has established detailed safety regulations to prevent falls.¹⁰ Those regulations address fall protection measures such as:

Personal fall protection systems, like harnesses and safety belts

Ropes and anchoring systems

Guardrails

Toeboards

Handholds and grips

Adequate lighting

Hole coverings

Lack of compliance with these standards can result in significant injuries and fatalities.

Fires And Explosions

It's no surprise that fires and explosions are a big hazard in the oil and gas industry, given the highly volatile vapors involved. Working with tanks, heaters, tanker trucks, vacuum trucks, welders and other ignition sources in close proximity to highly flammable hydrocarbons is a recipe for potential disaster.

Oil and gas companies are responsible for preventing fires and explosions by:

Monitoring
gas and vapor
levels

Establishing
safe procedures
for hot work

Complying
with requirements
for proper handling
and storage
of flammable
chemicals

Providing
adequate personal
protection
equipment (PPE)

Conducting
safety training

Maintaining
compliance with
applicable safety
standards

Additional safety measures may also be necessary, depending on the worksite and the specific fire hazards involved.



Other Hazards

Additional hazards that upstream oil and gas workers face include:

Asphyxiation
and chemical
exposure
in confined
spaces

Injuries
from pressurized
lines and pipes
bursting

Electrocution

As you can see,
accidents can happen
anytime, anywhere.



Catastrophic Injuries From Oil And Gas Accidents

Traumatic brain injuries

Spinal cord injuries

Paralysis

Bone fractures

Amputations

Burns





When Oil And Gas Companies Prioritize Profits Over Safety

Oil and gas companies have a responsibility to ensure safe work environments. In many cases, accidents are the direct result of their failure to do so.

Businesses in the oil and gas sector are notorious for prioritizing profits over safety. To many of them, workers are expendable.

As an employee or contractor in the industry, you might find yourself in many impossible situations when you're facing constant pressure to work harder and faster. You may have to take shortcuts at the expense of safety because you have no other options. You might unknowingly be exposed to the safety violations of other workers or site managers. You might not be properly trained in safety practices. And, you might not always have the opportunity or equipment necessary to protect yourself from hazards.

You're not in a position of power to question or push back on a workplace culture that exposes you to needless risks. Ultimately, it's the responsibility of the oil and gas companies to protect you and other workers from preventable accidents.

Now, you're injured, possibly with life-shattering consequences. You're worried about how you will support yourself and your family. You may never be able to work again.

Understanding Your Legal Options

You should never have to shoulder the tremendous financial burden of an injury on the job, especially when someone else cut corners at the expense of your safety.

Depending on your situation, you may have multiple paths to pursuing compensation for a work-related injury in the oil and gas sector. Those options include:

Workers' compensation

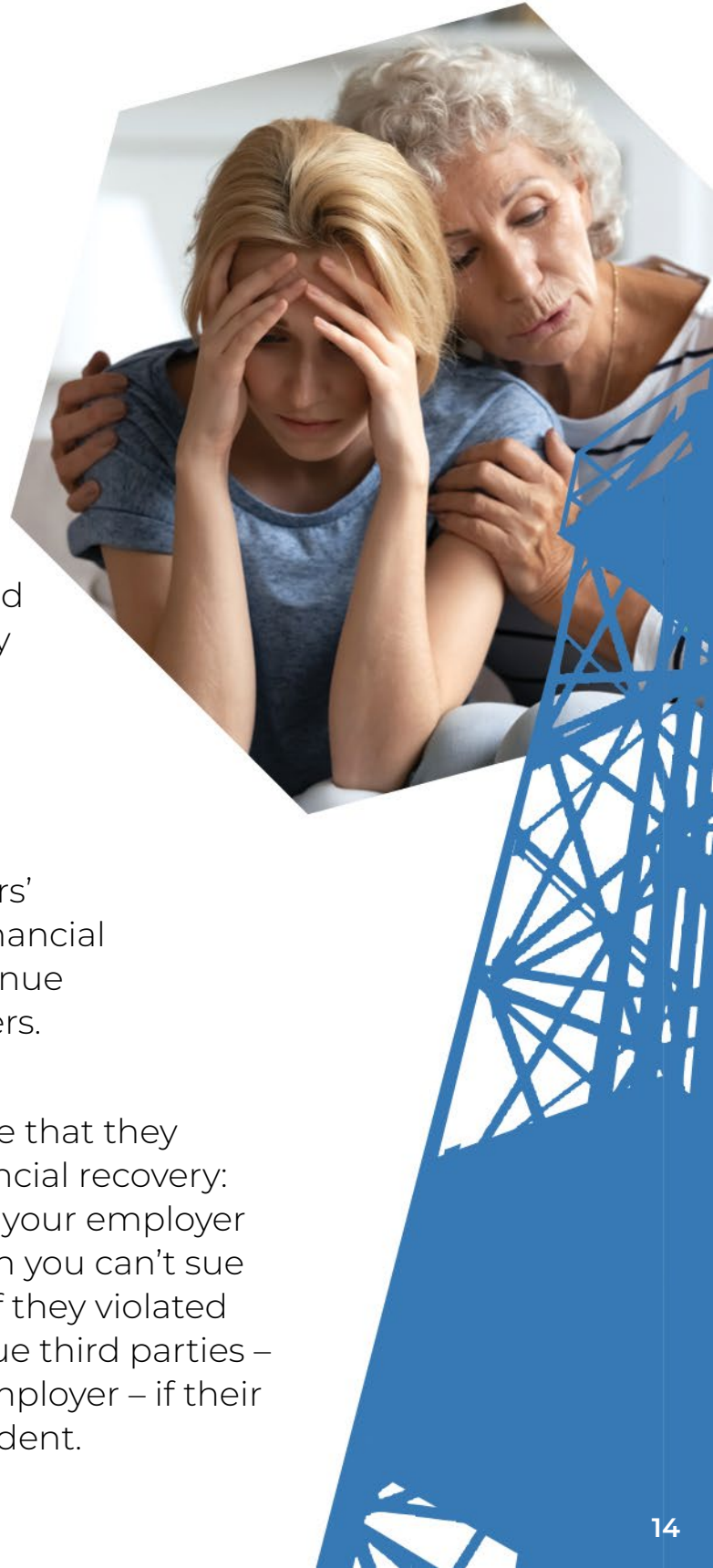
A personal injury lawsuit

For surviving family members who have lost a loved one due to an oil field accident, a wrongful death claim may also be an option.

You May Be Entitled To Multiple Sources Of Compensation

When you get hurt on the job, workers' compensation provides important financial and medical benefits. It's the first avenue of financial recovery for injured workers.

Many oil and gas workers aren't aware that they may also have another source of financial recovery: a **third-party personal injury case**. If your employer provides workers' comp benefits, then you can't sue them for a work-related injury, even if they violated safety standards. However, you can sue third parties – that is, businesses other than your employer – if their wrongdoing contributed to your accident.



Examples of third parties who may be liable for injuries include:

Other
contractors or
subcontractors

Repair and
maintenance
companies

Equipment
manufacturers

Site owners
or managers

Because oil and gas operations involve numerous businesses and contractors, you may have claims against multiple third parties.

Damages In Personal Injury And Wrongful Death Cases

Catastrophic injuries, such as amputations, burns and traumatic brain injuries, have lifelong ramifications. The financial impact of those injuries can be staggering.

A third-party personal injury claim offers a significant source of financial recovery in addition to workers' comp. Through a personal injury claim, you can pursue damages (compensation) for:

Any medical bills or accident-related expenses that aren't covered by workers' comp

Future medical expenses

Loss of your ability to work

Pain and suffering, which can be significant

In some cases, you might have grounds for seeking punitive damages on top of your other damages. The purpose of punitive damages is to punish wrongdoing on the part of companies that intentionally disregard safety or are extremely reckless.





In a wrongful death case against a third party, you can pursue damages for:

Funeral and burial expenses

Loss of your loved one's financial support

Loss of their companionship

A financial recovery in these cases can go a long way toward easing the burdens of a significant injury or tragic loss of a loved one in an oil field accident.



Making A Difference In Your Life And The Lives Of Other Workers

Oil and gas companies are highly financially motivated. By holding them accountable for the financial consequences of their wrongdoing, you help shift the industry toward a more safety-focused approach that doesn't jeopardize workers' lives in the pursuit of profits.

At the same time, you will be laying the foundation for your own future by securing the financial resources you need for a better life after a devastating injury or loss. It's a win-win.

Taking On Powerful Third-Party Oil And Gas Companies

Going up against oil and gas companies in personal injury litigation is no easy task. These opponents have vast resources at their disposal and experienced legal teams on their side.

You also need a strong legal team – one with the experience, resources and skill set to take on oil and gas companies. You need a David to battle their Goliath.

Buckingham & Vega Law Firm: Proven Advocacy For Injured Workers

Our lawyers stand up for the underdogs. They're passionate about representing oil and gas workers who have suffered the terrible consequences of the industry's failure to prioritize worker safety.

Our strong team of attorneys and robust support staff has the capacity to conduct a thorough investigation that lays the foundation for a strong case. They devote the highest level of effort and attention to every case they handle. Our team shares a commitment to treating clients like family, ensuring that they feel heard and supported.

Our lawyers have earned national recognition in the personal injury field. They have secured many millions of dollars for injury victims and their loved ones.

With offices in Albuquerque, Midland and Santa Fe and licensed attorneys in Arizona, we handle oil and gas injury cases across the entire Southwest.



OUR AWARD-WINNING FIRM FOUNDERS



KENT BUCKINGHAM

Kent Buckingham is an award-winning personal injury attorney with nearly 40 years of experience. In addition to his advocacy work on behalf of injury victims, he is an international speaker and has appeared as a legal commentator on national news networks.



ADRIAN VEGA

Adrian Vega is passionate about holding corporations accountable for the harm they have caused workers. As an accomplished attorney with almost two decades of experience, he has obtained multimillion-dollar verdicts in serious injury and wrongful death cases.



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