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Seaman sues after suffering crush injury to his hand

8/3/2010 2:23 PM By Michelle Massey

A seaman has filed a lawsuit against Gulf Copper and Transocean after his hand was crushed by a swinging valve.

Eric Gomez filed a lawsuit against Gulf Copper GP, Transocean Ltd. Transocean Offshore Deepwater Drilling and Transocean Deepwater on July 23 in Jefferson County District Court.

The incident occurred on Oct. 27, 2009, while Gomez was performing his regular duties as an electrician on a floating rig which was off the coast of Walvis, Namibia, Africa. Gomez and a Gulf Copper worker were attempting to repair a large converter valve, which was in excess of 1,000 pounds.

The valve was hanging by a rope and the Gulf Copper worker was in the process of exchanging the rope for a chain. During the exchange, the valve swung toward Gomez and the Gulf Copper worker and Gomez instinctively reached to grab the valve. The valve crushed his right hand, wrist, fingers and thumb.

The defendants are accused of negligence for failing to provide a reasonably safe place to work, failing to properly train employees, failing to prevent the Gulf Copper worker from cutting the rope holding the valve, negligent retention and training of employees, failing to maintain adequate safety programs, failing to properly and safely supervise the activities on the rig, failing to properly maintain machines, equipment and mechanism located on the rig and failing to inspect and maintain suitable equipment .

Gomez is seeking damages for physical pain, mental anguish, loss of wages, loss of earning capacity, medical expenses, physical impairment, lost ability to perform household services, maintenance and cure, interest, and court costs.

Houston attorney Adam Q. Voyles of McKenna Harper is representing Gomez. Jury trial requested.

Judge Gary Sanderson, 60th District Court, is assigned to the case.

Case No. B187-364

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