

Innovative Answer for Protecting Rig Wiring

Information provided by
Thomas & Betts

Drill rigs require safe, reliable electrical systems, but they are also designed to be easily assembled, disassembled, and transported from site to site. To manage the electrical wiring used on the rigs, cable tray systems are typically used. However, this leaves wiring exposed and subject to damage and/or theft as the rigs are transported or stored at remote locations.

All Star Electric, an electrical contractor based in Houston, Texas, specializes in installing electrical systems on drilling rigs. On a recent project, the specification called for electrical conduit – rather than a cable tray – to be used to house the wiring to prevent damage and theft.

Ken Stolte, vice president of All Star Electric, immediately realized running wiring through traditional conduit would be difficult and expensive, especially considering the rig's compact construction and disassembly requirements. He considered running the conductors through straight conduit and splicing them together

at the corners, but that wasn't an ideal solution either. The answer came when he received a sample of a new conduit fitting - the LU® Universal Conduit Elbow from Thomas & Betts (T&B).

The LU® universal conduit elbow with BlueKote® interior coating is a right-angled conduit fitting featuring a wider radius and rather than having a sharp right angle with an opening before the bend, the LU® features a large-access opening in the center of the bend.



“The large, angled opening and the PTFE [Polytetrafluoroethylene or Teflon]-based interior coating makes it easy to pull the wire,” Stolte said. “The coating also helps prevent damage to the insulation from sharp edges.” In fact, Stolte said they reduced the time needed to pull wire by roughly 30% when using the LU® con-

duit elbow. Since the wiring is protected in conduit, the company was also able to save money by using nontray-rated cable. The LU® also functions as both an elbow and inspection port for those codes requiring an inspection port.

Considering the harsh and extreme environments most drill rigs are exposed to, corrosion protection is another benefit of the LU® fitting. LU® offers three layers of corrosion protection: zinc electroplating for rust protection; baked-on epoxy powder coating, which can tolerate exposure to harsh chemicals; and a final exterior baked-on epoxy paint for additional corrosion resistance. The BlueKote® layer on the body's interior also provides an additional layer of corrosion protection.

Stolte said it was like nothing he had ever seen before. “The customers are getting what they really want. They don't want wiring runs with splices in them. I've been doing this for 33 years and I think back to all the times I could have used that fitting. It just works so well.”

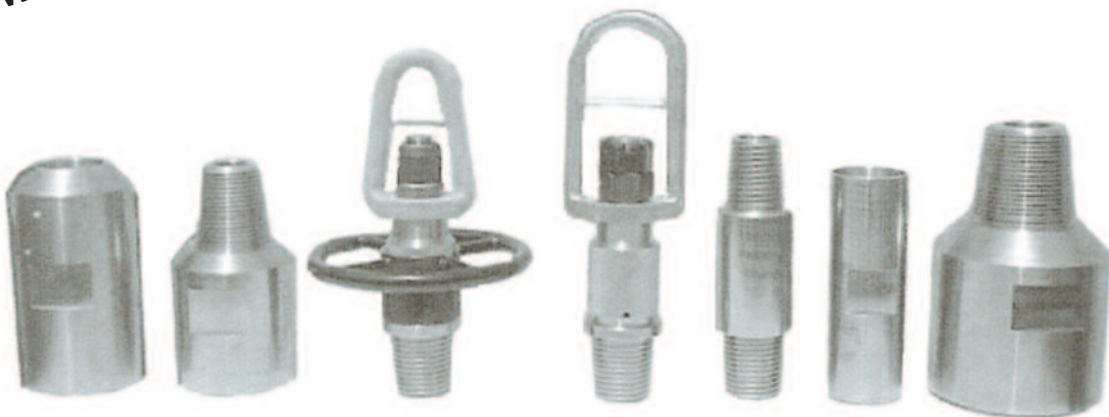
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