Bypassing safety controls

Bypassing safety controls could mean disabling or overriding safety equipment, deviating from procedures, or crossing a barrier. Safety-critical controls include:

- Equipment (such as fire and explosion protection and mitigation systems, guards, interlocks, alarms and safety-critical monitoring equipment) whose purpose is to prevent a fatality or other major accident, limit the consequences of a major accident, or whose failure could cause or contribute substantially to a fatality or other major accident.
- Procedures that if not performed correctly or at the right time could result in a fatality or other major accident.

Bypassing Safety Controls

Obtain authorisation before overriding or disabling safety controls

- I understand and use safety-critical equipment and procedures which apply to my task
- I obtain authorisation before:
  - disabling or overriding safety equipment
  - deviating from procedures
  - crossing a barrier

Source: IOGP, Report 459 *IOGP Life-Saving Rules*

Here are some incidents that have happened to people bypassing safety controls:

Emergency fire pump on vessel fails to start from the bridge

A fire drill exercise was being performed on a vessel. A crew member tried to start the emergency fire pump from the bridge but was unable to do so. The main switch in the engine room had been switched to local control.

Responding to alarms

An alarm went off at low levels, and two workers deactivated it after confirming 'safe levels' on their personal gas detectors. Later that day, two other workers entered the area, and their personal monitors went off...

Hydrogen sulphide (H2S) alarm tampering

Periodic routine maintenance was being carried out on a hydrogen sulphide (H2S) detection and alarm system situated in a loading rack. Workers discovered a nail was jammed into the silence button...

Fatal fall from height after crossing safety barrier

A crew member was working alone and preparing to paint the leading edge of the open ramp hatch cover. He died as a result of 4.5 metres fall through a vehicle ramp hatch.

Methane sensor failure due to unauthorised modifications

Engineers were repairing a cylinder of a main engine vessel, within a gas valve unit room. While they were replacing expansion bellows, an O-ring, separating its inner and outer sections, was damaged...