

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONDUCTING OPERATIONS TO SUBTERRANEAN FORMATIONS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The statements in this section merely provide background information related to the present disclosure and may not constitute prior art.

[0002] In the oil and gas industry, it is often necessary to deploy a large quantity of dedicated fluids, solids, machines and equipment to locations for conducting operations to subterranean formations. Such operations may include, but are not limited to, drilling, cementing, logging, and stimulating, which may further include acid treatment and high pressure fracturing, etc. For simplicity, in the current application, they are generally referred to as “operations” or “treatments” to subterranean formations.

[0003] Because the volume and weight of the materials and equipment are typically quite large, dedicated vessels or trucks are needed to deploy them to the wellsite. The transportation process can be especially challenging when heavy equipment and materials need to be transported to climate-unfriendly regions, such as the North Sea off the coastal line of Norway. Typically, containers and equipment are welded on the deck or a vessel or otherwise permanently affixed to the deck of the vessel to ensure the safety during transportation.

[0004] However, this arrangement is not flexible in terms of accommodating different projects required on the wellsite. For example, a high pressure fracturing operation may be followed by an acid stimulation operation. To successfully perform the two operations without substantial delay, two dedicated vessels or trucks are often ordered and deployed at the wellsite. This complicates the logistics of the operations and increases the resource (both human and equipment) needed at the wellsite.

[0005] Modular treatment systems have been contemplated. However, due to safety and other concerns, many systems still require a substantial amount of welding to permanently affix the container or equipment on the transportation platform. It may take weeks to convert a vessel or truck from one purpose to another. This

application aims to address one or more problems associated with the current system for conducting operations to subterranean formations.

SUMMARY

[0006] According to one aspect, there is provided a system for treating a subterranean formation. The system comprises a platform, a grillage mounted on the platform, at least one module for treating the subterranean formation, and a plurality of locks that mechanically engage the grillage with the module. Each lock comprises a first plate, a second plate and a connector that connects the first plate and the second plate. The first plate is configured to mechanically engage the grillage and the second plate is configured to mechanically engage the module for treating the subterranean formation.

[0007] According to another aspect, provided a lock that comprises a first plate, a second plate and a connector that connects the first plate and the second plate. The first plate comprises a first through-hole that corresponds to a first opening in a grillage so that a first fastening device can be inserted into the first through-hole and the first opening to mechanically engage the lock and the grillage. The second plate is configured to mechanically engage a module for treating a subterranean formation.

[0008] According to a further aspect, there is provided a method of treating a subterranean formation. The method comprises mounting a grillage on a platform, mechanically engaging the grillage with at least one module for treating the subterranean formation by using a plurality of removable locks, deploying the platform to a wellsite, and conducting the treatment of the subterranean formation. Each lock comprises a first plate configured to mechanically engage the grillage, a second plate configured to mechanically engage the module, and a connector that connects the first plate and the second plate.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] These and other features and advantages will be better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

[0010] FIG. 1 is a schematic representation of a system for treating a subterranean formation according to one embodiment of the current application.

[0011] FIG. 2 is a schematic representation of the layout of a grillage according to another embodiment of the current application.

[0012] FIG. 3 is a schematic representation of the layout of a grillage according to another embodiment of the current application.

[0013] FIG. 4 is a schematic representation of a lock according to one embodiment of the current application.

[0014] FIG. 5 is a schematic representation of a lock according to another embodiment of the current application.

[0015] FIG. 6 is a schematic representation of a lock according to another embodiment of the current application.

[0016] FIG. 7 is a schematic representation of a lock according to another embodiment of the current application.

[0017] FIG. 8 is a schematic representation of a lock according to another embodiment of the current application.

[0018] FIG. 9 is a schematic representation of a system for treating a subterranean formation according to one embodiment of the current application, with more detailed showing of the assembly where the lock is mechanically engaged with the grillage and the module.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SOME ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

[0019] Some embodiments relate generally to systems and methods for treating a subterranean formation.

[0020] According to one embodiment, FIG. 1 shows a vessel **10** for treating an offshore subterranean formation. The vessel comprises a deck **40**, a grillage **20** mounted on the deck **40**, and at least one module **30** for treating the subterranean formation. The grillage **20** can be welded to the deck **40** of the vessel **10** or otherwise secured to the deck. In some cases, the grillage is permanently affixed to the deck **40** of the vessel **10**. In some other cases, the grillage is removably attached to the deck **40** of the vessel **10**.

[0021] The layout of the grillage **20** can take various forms. FIG. 2 and FIG. 3 show two exemplary embodiments of the grillage **20**. As depicted, a plurality of beams **50** and crossbeams **60** are interconnected together to form a network. In one embodiment, the beams **50** are essentially perpendicular to the crossbeams **60**. In other embodiments, the beams **50** and the crossbeams **60** are connected at an angle that is substantially different from 90°. To increase the overall strength and integrity of the grillage **20**, diagonal bars **70** can be optionally inserted into the network.

[0022] The cross-section of the beam **50**, crossbeam **60**, and the diagonal bar **70** can be of any shape. In one embodiment, as shown in FIG. 2D and FIG. 3D, the cross-section of the beam **50**, crossbeam **60**, and the diagonal bar **70** is in the shape of an "I" bar. That is, the beam **50**, crossbeam **60**, or the diagonal bar **70** has a horizontally disposed top plate **52**, **52'**, a horizontally disposed bottom plate **54**, **54'**, and a vertically disposed connection bar **56'** that connects the top plate **52**, **52'** and the bottom plate **54**, **54'**. In some embodiments, the height of the cross-section of the diagonal bar **70** is small than the height of the cross-section of the beam **50** and crossbeam **60**. In one case, the height of the cross-section of the diagonal bar **70** is approximately a half of the height of the cross-section of the beam **50** and crossbeam **60**.

[0023] The distance between every two adjacent beams **50** (or two adjacent crossbeams **60**) can be equal over the entire span of the grillage **20**. Alternatively, different distances can be adopted at different sections of the grillage **20**. For example, the boarder sections of the grillage **20** can be equipped with more beams **50** (and/or crossbeams **60**) so that a narrowerly-spaced network can be constructed. Therefore, when different sized containers/machines are positioned on the grillage **20**, they can be aligned first with a beam **50** and/or a crossbeam **60** in the center section of the grillage **20** and then aligned with a beam **50** and/or a crossbeam **60** in the boarder sections of the grillage **20**. Because there are more beams **50** and/or crossbeams **60** in the boarder sections, it is more likely to locate a beam **50** and/or a crossbeam **60** in the boarder sections of the grillage **20** than in the center section of the grillage **20**. Variations to the above described grillage layout are possible. For example, there can be multiple narrowly-spaced regions and broadly-spaced regions alternatively disposed from one end of the grillage **20** to the other side of the grillage **20**. All such variations are within the scope of the current application.

[0024] In some embodiments, the beams **50**, crossbeams **60**, and the diagonal bars **70** are welded together or otherwise permanently connected together to form a permanent network. In some other embodiments, the beams **50**, crossbeams **60**, and the diagonal bars **70** are removably connected together to form a temporary network, which can be disassembled into pieces after use. In some further embodiments, some beams **50**, crossbeams **60**, and/or the diagonal bars **70** are welded together or otherwise permanently connected together to form a permanent network, and some other beams **50**, crossbeams **60**, and/or the diagonal bars **70** are removably connected to the permanent network so that they can be removed from the permanent network depending on the specific requirement of an operation. Additional beams **50**, crossbeams **60**, and/or the diagonal bars **70** can be removably added to the grillage **20** as well.

[0025] As depicted in FIG. 2 and FIG. 3, the top surfaces **52** of the beams **50** and crossbeams **60** can be equipped with a plurality of first openings **80** that are configured to receive first fastening devices **150**, such as bolts or screws, to secure locks **100** (to be discussed in more details below) on the top plate **52** of the beam **50** or the crossbeam **60**.

[0026] Referring now to FIGs. 4-8, several examples of locks **100** are depicted to illustrate the embodiments of the current application. However, it should be understood that locks with different shapes or dimensions can be adopted by people skilled in the art after reviewing the current application. Such variations are within the scope of the current application.

[0027] In FIGs. 4-8, locks according to embodiments of the current application are generally indicated at **100**. The lock **100** comprises a first plate **110**, a second plate **120**, and a connector **130** that connects the first plate **110** and the second plate **120**. The first plate **110** comprises a first through-hole **180** or a plurality of first through-holes **180**. The second plate **120** comprises a second through-hole **190** or a plurality of second through-holes **190**. The connector **130** comprises a third through-hole **135** or a plurality of third through-holes **135**. In the depicted embodiments, the connector **130** is shown in the shape of a plate; however it should be understood that other shapes can be employed as well.

[0028] In some embodiments, the connector **130** is disposed on a top surface **112** of the first plate **110**, and is substantially vertical in reference to the first plate **110**. The

connector **130** has a protrusion **140** that extends from a side surface **132** of the connector **130** in a direction "**x**" that is substantially parallel to the plane where the first plate **110** occupies. The protrusion **140** takes place at a height "**h**" from the top surface of the first plate **110** and expands a distance "**d**" off the side surface **132** of the connector **130**. In some embodiments, the height "**h**" is at least slightly larger than the thickness of the second plate **120**, so that when the second plate **120** is connected to the bottom surface **142** of the protrusion **140**, the bottom surface **122** of the second plate **120** is at least slightly higher than the top surface of the first plate **110**. In some embodiments, the distance "**d**" is the same as or slightly larger than the width of the second plate **120**, so that from a side view (FIGs. 4C, 5C, 6C, 7C, 8C), the second plate **120** is located substantially underneath the protrusion **140**.

[0029] Moreover, in some embodiments, the side surface **114** of the first plate **110** is only slightly outside of the side surface **132** of the connector **130**, best seen in FIGs. 4C, 5C, 6C, 7C, 8C. Therefore, due to span of the protrusion **140** (distance "**d**" in FIGs. 4C, 5C, 6C, 7C, 8C), the second plate **120** is substantially offset from the first plate **110** when the lock is viewed from the top, as illustrated in FIGs. 4B, 5B, 6B, 7B, 8B.

[0030] Referring now to FIGs. 4B, 5B, 6B, 7B, and 8B showing the top view of the lock **100**, according to some embodiments, the connector **130** is disposed along a center line **A-A'** of the first plate **110** and the second plate **120**. In some other embodiments, the connector **130** is disposed off the center line **A-A'** of the first plate **110** and the second plate **120**. In some further embodiments, more than one connector is disposed on the top surface **112** of the first plate **110** and connects the second plate **120** via protrusions **140**.

[0031] In FIGs. 4B, 5B, 6B, 7B, and 8B, according to one embodiment, two sets of first through-holes **180** are provided on the first plates **110**, one set on each side of the connector **130**. The first through-holes **180** in each set are arranged in a linear fashion with equal distance between each two adjacent first through-holes **180**. However, it should be understood that other arrangements of the first through-holes are also possible. Similarly, in the depicted embodiments, two second through-holes **190** are provided on the second plate **120**, one on each side of the connector **130** with equal distance from the connector **130**. It should be understood that other arrangements of the second through-holes are also possible.

[0032] Referring now to FIG. 9, according to one embodiment, a system for treating a subterranean formation is depicted. In this embodiment, a grillage **20** is mechanically engaged with a module **200** for treating the subterranean formation by a lock **100**. The lock **100** comprises a first plate **110**, a second plate **120**, and a connector **130** that connects the first plate **110** and the second plate **120**. The first plate **110** comprises a first through-hole **180** that corresponds to a first opening **80** in the grillage **20** so that a first fastening device **150** can be inserted into the first through-hole **180** and the first opening **80** to mechanically engage the lock **100** and the grillage **20**.

[0033] The second plate **120** is configured to mechanically engage a module **200** for treating the subterranean formation. In one embodiment, the second plate **120** is in direct contact with a surface of the module **200**. In another embodiment, the second plate **120** comprises a second through-hole **190** which corresponds to a second opening (not shown) on the module **200** so that a second fastening device **160** can be inserted into the second through-hole **190** and the second opening to mechanically engage the lock **100** and the module **200**. In yet another embodiment, the second plate **120** comprises a second through-hole **190** through which a second fastening device **160** can be inserted and then exert mechanical and/or frictional forces directly on the module **120**.

[0034] To increase the stability of the assembly, in some cases, a side surface **202** of the module **200** is in direct contact with at least one of a side surface **114** of the first plate **110** and a side surface **132** of the connector **130**.

[0035] The fastening devices **150**, **160** can be a bolt and a nut, a screw, a threaded rod, or any other mechanism that can engage two structures by mechanical and/or frictional forces. The first through-hole **180**, the first opening **80**, the second through-hole **190**, and the second opening (not shown) may optionally have threaded internal surfaces or other mechanism that can mechanically engage the fastening devices **150**, **160**.

[0036] In the depicted embodiment in FIG. 9, the first fastening device **150** is in the form of a bolt **154** and a nut **158**, wherein the bolt **154** is first inserted into the first through-hole **180** of the first plate **110**, through the first opening **80** of the grillage **20**, and tightened by nut **158** located on the bottom side of the top plate **52** of the grillage

20. Variations to this embodiment are possible and are within the scope of the current application.

[0037] As depicted in FIG. 9, the second fastening device **160** is in the form of a bolt **164** and a tightening nut **168**. In one embodiment, the internal surface of the second through-hole **190** and the second opening (not shown) have threaded internal surfaces or other mechanism that can mechanically engage the second fastening device **160**. The external surface of the second fastening device **160** is also threaded or otherwise configured to mechanically engage the tightening nut **168**. Therefore, once the second fastening device **160** has advanced to a desired location, the fastening device **160** can be lowered to the top surface of the second plate **120** so as to hold the second fastening device **160** in place. Variations to this embodiment are possible and are within the scope of the current application.

[0038] Typically, a plurality of locks is used in a subterranean formation treatment system such as vessel **10** as shown in FIG. 1 above. However, situations may justify the use of only one lock on a particular vessel **10**.

[0039] It should be understood that although the above descriptions are provided in the context of a vessel for offshore operations, the transportation platform **40** can be in any form perceivable by people skilled in the art in view of the teachings of the current application. In some embodiments, the platform **40** is a deck or a portion of a deck of a ship, vessel, or a towboat. In some other embodiments, the platform **40** is a chassis of a road legal truck. In some additional embodiments, the platform **40** is a flatbed that can be lifted and mounted on a transportation means, such as a truck, a trailer, a ship, a vessel, or a towboat, etc. Variations to the form of the transportable platform **40** are within the disclosure of the current application.

[0040] The preceding description has been presented with reference to some illustrative embodiments of the Inventors' concept. Persons skilled in the art and technology to which this invention pertains will appreciate that alterations and changes in the described structures and methods of operation can be practiced without meaningfully departing from the principle, and scope of this invention. Accordingly, the foregoing description should not be read as pertaining only to the precise structures described and shown in the accompanying drawings, but rather should be read as consistent with and as support for the following claims, which are to have their fullest and fairest scope.

We claim:

1. A system for treating a subterranean formation, the system comprising:
a platform;
a grillage mounted on the platform;
at least one module for treating the subterranean formation; and
a plurality of locks, each having a first plate, a second plate and a connector that connects the first plate and the second plate;
wherein the first plate is configured to mechanically engage the grillage, the second plate is configured to mechanically engage the module for treating the subterranean formation.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the first plate comprises a first through-hole that corresponds to a first opening in the grillage so that a first fastening device can be inserted into the first through-hole and the first opening to mechanically engage the lock and the grillage.
3. The system of claim 1, wherein the second plate comprises a second through-hole that corresponds to a second opening in the module so that a second fastening device can be inserted into the second through-hole and the second opening to mechanically engage the lock and the module.
4. The system of claim 1, wherein the second plate comprises a second through-hole through which a second fastening device can be inserted and exert mechanical forces on the module.
5. The system of claim 1, wherein the first plate and the second plate is substantially parallel to each other.
6. The system of claim 1, wherein the connector is substantially vertical in reference to either the first plate or the second plate.
7. The system of claim 1, wherein the platform is a deck of a vessel or a chassis of a truck.
8. The system of claim 1, wherein the module further comprises a skid upon which the second plate engages.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the module is a solid bulk container, a liquid container, a machine or equipment, a winch of wireline, or a reel of coiled tubing.

10. A lock comprising a first plate, a second plate and a connector that connects the first plate and the second plate;

wherein the first plate comprises a first through-hole that corresponds to a first opening in a grillage so that a first fastening device can be inserted into the first through-hole and the first opening to mechanically engage the lock and the grillage;

wherein the second plate is configured to mechanically engage a module for treating a subterranean formation.

11. The lock of claim 10, wherein the second plate comprises a second through-hole that corresponds to a second opening in the module for treating a subterranean formation so that a second fastening device can be inserted into the second through-hole and the second opening to mechanically engage the lock and the module.

12. The lock of claim 10, wherein the second plate comprises a second through-hole through which a second fastening device can be inserted and exert mechanical forces on the module.

13. The lock of claim 10, wherein the first plate and the second plate is substantially parallel to each other.

14. The lock of claim 10, wherein the connector is substantially vertical in reference to either the first plate or the second plate.

15. A method of treating a subterranean formation, the method comprising:

mounting a grillage on a platform;

mechanically engaging the grillage with at least one module for treating the subterranean formation by using a plurality of removable locks, wherein each lock comprises a first plate configured to mechanically engage the grillage, a second plate configured to mechanically engage the module, and a connector that connects the first plate and the second plate;

deploying the platform to a wellsite; and

conducting the treatment of the subterranean formation.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the mechanically engaging comprises inserting a first fastening device into a first through-hole on the first plate into a first opening on the grillage.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the mechanically engaging comprises inserting a second fastening device into a second through-hole on the second plate into a second opening on the module.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the mechanically engaging comprises inserting a second fastening device into a second through-hole on the second plate and exerting mechanical forces on the module.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the platform is a deck of a vessel or a chassis of a truck.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the module further comprises a skid upon which the second plate engages.