

The blowout prevention device, which was touted as providing absolute protection against blowouts, not surprisingly turns out to have some flaws. In a 2001 document, according to the [Washington Post](#), drilling rig operator Transocean said there were 260 “failure modes” that could require removal of the blowout preventer.

Nothing is failure-proof unless the laws of physics make failure an impossibility — and even then, human beings can probably still screw things up. This doesn't mean that safety devices are unwarranted or that we should always obsess about failure risks, but accidents happen when people start taking safety for granted.