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The colossal environmental disaster brewing in the Gulf of Mexico has eclipsed another tragic story related to April 20, 2010, BP oil rig explosion: the rig workers. The survivors and families of the 11 workers who were killed [are now finding out](#) that their recovery is limited by federal law to economic loss – that is, the income the worker would have made had the explosion not occurred. They can also recover conscious pain and suffering of the worker – if they can prove it. Otherwise, the federal Death On The High Seas Act bars recovery of any non-economic damages that are ordinarily recoverable in civil suits. Worst of all, punitive damages may not be imposed, even though there is evidence that BP and Transocean compromised safety and, after the explosion, tried to get workers to sign a release of liability for \$5,000. Individuals are held responsible every day for their actions. So should companies who put the safety of their workers, the public and the environment at risk.