



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Office of Communications**

NEWS RELEASE

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**MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE TO PUBLISH INFORMATION
ON OCS CIVIL PENALTIES PAID**

Today, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) published in the Federal Register a summary of civil penalties paid September 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997, for violations occurring in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The summary highlights the identity of the party, the regulation violated, and the amount paid.

The MMS is responsible for ensuring safe and clean offshore operations in the OCS. The civil penalty process is designed to encourage companies to comply with the statutes and regulations by pursuing, assessing, and collecting penalties. The penalties summary provides information to the public on violations of special concern in OCS operations and provides an additional incentive for safe and environmentally sound operations.

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 expanded and strengthened MMS's authority to impose penalties for violating its regulations. Section 8201 of OPA 90 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to assess a civil penalty without providing notice and time for corrective action where a failure to comply with applicable regulations results in a threat of serious, irreparable, or immediate harm or damage to human life or the environment.

Between August 18, 1990, and December 31, 1997, MMS has initiated 170 compliance reviews, which resulted in 170 civil penalty cases; assessed 102 civil penalties; and collected over \$1,398,820 in fines.

A quarterly update of this list and additional information will be posted on the MMS webpage at <http://www.mms.gov>. The civil penalties update is located under Managing Offshore Resources- National-Inspection and Enforcement Activities.

MMS is the federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources including sand on the OCS, and last year, collected and disbursed about \$6 billion in revenues from offshore mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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MMS Internet website address: <http://www.boem.gov>
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