



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
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NEWS RELEASE

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Two New Rules Published in *Federal Register*

On May 17, the Minerals Management Service published in the *Federal Register* a final rule on decommissioning activities and a proposed rule on submitting exploration, development and production plans.

The **final rule** amends MMS regulations governing oil and gas operations in the outer continental shelf to update and consolidate decommissioning requirements (30 CFR 250, Subpart Q). The amended regulation follows the present sequence of plugging a well, decommissioning the platform and pipeline, and clearing the lease site. The updated requirements reflect the recent changes in technology. The effective date of the rule is July 16, 2002.

The **proposed rule**, 30 CFR 250, Subpart B, updates the requirements for submitting plans to MMS, for review and approval, before operators can begin production of oil, gas, and sulfur in the outer continental shelf. It also contains new sections on requirements for Deepwater Operations Plans and Conservation Information Documents. The comment period for the Subpart B proposed rulemaking will close on August 15, 2002.

“The proposed changes will help ensure that plans submitted to MMS for approval contain all the necessary information so that MMS can process them in a more streamlined and efficient manner,” said MMS Director Johnnie Burton. “These changes will help operators continue to decommission their facilities safely and with a more efficient process.”

MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas and other mineral resources on the outer continental shelf in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for and disburses mineral revenues from federal and Indian leases. These revenues totaled nearly \$10 billion in 2001 and more than \$120 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and federal park and recreation lands.

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