

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE  
GULF OF MEXICO REGION

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

1. OCCURRED

DATE: 19-JUL-2009 TIME: 2000 HOURS

2. OPERATOR: Shell Offshore Inc.

REPRESENTATIVE: DiCarlo, Theresa  
TELEPHONE: (504) 728-6237

CONTRACTOR:

REPRESENTATIVE: Bryce Morgan-Frontier Drill  
TELEPHONE: (713) 422-4325

3. OPERATOR/CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVE/SUPERVISOR  
ON SITE AT TIME OF INCIDENT:

4. LEASE: G06886

AREA: VK LATITUDE: 29.20252225  
BLOCK: 783 LONGITUDE: -87.95335374

5. PLATFORM:

RIG NAME: FRONTIER DRILLER

6. ACTIVITY:

EXPLORATION (POE)  
 DEVELOPMENT/PRODUCTION  
(DOCD/POD)

7. TYPE:

HISTORIC INJURY  
 REQUIRED EVACUATION  
 LTA (1-3 days)  
 LTA (>3 days)  
 RW/JT (1-3 days)  
 RW/JT (>3 days)  
 Other Injury

FATALITY  
 POLLUTION  
 FIRE  
 EXPLOSION

LWC  HISTORIC BLOWOUT  
 UNDERGROUND  
 SURFACE  
 DEVERTER  
 SURFACE EQUIPMENT FAILURE OR PROCEDURES

COLLISION  HISTORIC  >\$25K  <=\$25K

STRUCTURAL DAMAGE  
 CRANE  
 OTHER LIFTING DEVICE  
 DAMAGED/DISABLED SAFETY SYS.  
 INCIDENT >\$25K  
 H2S/15MIN./20PPM  
 REQUIRED MUSTER  
 SHUTDOWN FROM GAS RELEASE  
 OTHER

6. OPERATION:

PRODUCTION  
 DRILLING  
 WORKOVER  
 COMPLETION  
 HELICOPTER  
 MOTOR VESSEL  
 PIPELINE SEGMENT NO.  
 OTHER

8. CAUSE:

EQUIPMENT FAILURE  
 HUMAN ERROR  
 EXTERNAL DAMAGE  
 SLIP/TRIP/FALL  
 WEATHER RELATED  
 LEAK  
 UPSET H2O TREATING  
 OVERBOARD DRILLING FLUID  
 OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

9. WATER DEPTH: 1450 FT.

10. DISTANCE FROM SHORE: MI.

11. WIND DIRECTION: SE  
SPEED: 5 M.P.H.

12. CURRENT DIRECTION:  
SPEED: M.P.H.

13. SEA STATE: 0 FT.

17. INVESTIGATION FINDINGS:

A pollution event occurred as the result of the Driller failing to place the diverter panel in the "Test" mode prior to conducting a diverter test. At the time of the incident, drilling operations were suspended to perform a function test on the diverter bag that was just installed. The investigation determined that the Driller was new to this rig. Inadvertently, the diverter test was performed while the diverter panel was in the "Drilling" mode. Subsequent to the test, the Driller started the mud pumps and began circulating when he observed a fluid loss on the monitors and immediately shut down the pumps. An estimated 28 barrels (bbls) of 12.4 ppg Synthetic Based Mud (SBM) was pumped during the incident. Approximately 14 bbls went back into the pit system and 14 bbls went down the diverter lines, of which, 7.5 bbls was recovered from the lines. An estimated 6.5 bbls of SBM was released into Gulf waters, of which, 73% or approximately 4.7 bbls was oil. The SBM contained 73% base oil and 27% calcium chloride. The National Response Center (NRC) was notified of the incident on 20 July 20 2009 at 0940 hours (NRC Report No. 912098).

18. LIST THE PROBABLE CAUSE(S) OF ACCIDENT:

**Human Error:**

The Driller failed to place the diverter panel in the "Test" mode before performing the diverter test.

19. LIST THE CONTRIBUTING CAUSE(S) OF ACCIDENT:

The Driller was not familiar with the rig and the equipment.

20. LIST THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

21. PROPERTY DAMAGED:

NATURE OF DAMAGE:

6.5 bbls of Synthetic Based Mud (SBM)

Lost overboard

ESTIMATED AMOUNT (TOTAL): \$1,924

22. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT RECURRANCE NARRATIVE:

The MMS New Orleans District makes no recommendations to the MMS Regional Office of

**Safety Management (OSM).**

23. POSSIBLE OCS VIOLATIONS RELATED TO ACCIDENT: **YES**

24. SPECIFY VIOLATIONS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING. NARRATIVE:

**E-100 - 30 CFR 250.107(a)**

**Operator did not prevent unauthorized discharge of pollutants into offshore waters.**

25. DATE OF ONSITE INVESTIGATION:

**20-JUL-2009**

26. ONSITE TEAM MEMBERS:

**Elbert Clemens /**

29. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

PANEL FORMED: **NO**

OCS REPORT:

30. DISTRICT SUPERVISOR:

**David Trocquet**

APPROVED

DATE: **10-MAR-2010**

# POLLUTION ATTACHMENT

1. VOLUME: GAL 6.5 BBL  
YARDS LONG X YARDS WIDE

APPEARANCE: **RAINBOW SHEEN**

2. TYPE OF HYDROCARBON RELEASED:  OIL  
 DIESEL  
 CONDENSATE  
 HYDRAULIC  
 NATURAL GAS  
 OTHER Synthetic Based Mud

3. SOURCE OF HYDROCARBON RELEASED: **Diverter lines**

4. WERE SAMPLES TAKEN? **NO**

5. WAS CLEANUP EQUIPMENT ACTIVATED? **NO**

IF SO, TYPE:  SKIMMER  
 CONTAINMENT BOOM  
 ABSORPTION EQUIPMENT  
 DISPERSANTS  
 OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

6. ESTIMATED RECOVERY: 0 GAL BBL

7. RESPONSE TIME: HOURS

8. IS THE POLLUTION IN THE PROXIMITY OF AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA (CLASS I)? **NO**

9. HAS REGION OIL SPILL TASK FORCE BEEN NOTIFIED? **NO**

10. CONTACTED SHORE: **NO** IF YES, WHERE:

11. WERE ANY LIVE ANIMALS OBSERVED NEAR: **NO**

12. WERE ANY OILED OR DEAD ANIMALS OBSERVED NEAR SPILL: **NO**