

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

NTL No. 98-27

Effective Date: December 1, 1998

NOTICE TO LESSEES AND OPERATORS OF FEDERAL OIL, GAS, AND SULPHUR
LEASES AND PIPELINE RIGHT-OF-WAY HOLDERS
IN THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF, GULF OF MEXICO OCS REGION

**Guidelines for Eliminating Trash and Debris Resulting from
Gulf of Mexico OCS Operations**

This Notice To Lessees and Operators (NTL) updates and supersedes NTL No. 98-14, dated August 10, 1998. Please contact the Plans Section at (504) 736-2419 if you have any questions regarding this NTL.

Marine trash and debris pose a threat to fish and wildlife and, when they come ashore, detract from the aesthetic quality of recreational shore fronts and increase the cost of park and beach maintenance. Since oil and gas operations in the Gulf of Mexico contribute to this chronic problem, 30 CFR 250.300(a) and (b)(6) prohibit you from deliberately discharging containers and other similar materials (i.e., trash and debris) into the marine environment, and 30 CFR 250.300(c) requires you to make durable identification markings on equipment, tools, and containers (especially drums) and other material.

Furthermore, in response to MARPOL-Annex V, the Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act, and the Shore Protection Act, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have issued regulations that strictly prohibit you from disposing any solid waste, apart from ground-up food waste, anywhere in the marine environment. These USCG and EPA regulations further require that you become more proactive in avoiding accidental loss of solid waste items by developing facility waste management plans, posting informational placards, manifesting trash sent to shore, and taking special precautions such as covering outside trash bins to prevent accidental loss of solid waste.

Regarding these requirements, you should exercise special caution when you handle and dispose of small items and packaging materials, particularly those made of nonbiodegradable, environmentally persistent materials such as plastic or glass, that can be lost in the marine environment and washed ashore. Increasing your individual worker's awareness of the problem and emphasizing his responsibilities will do much to reduce the litter problem and help control the unintended loss of items such as empty buckets, hard hats, shrink wrap, strip lumber, and pipe thread protectors.

The Gulf of Mexico OCS Region (GOMR) acknowledges and appreciates the steps taken by the Offshore Operators Committee (OOC) in establishing a special Waste Handling and Recycling Committee to improve OCS waste management practices. Waste reduction, reuse of equipment and materials, bulk storage of high volume supplies, elimination of Styrofoam cups and food containers, and efforts to establish recycling programs are evident at many OCS facilities and are making a difference.

The GOMR recommends that you use the ideas, suggestions, and training aids developed by the OOC to improve your waste management programs. You should periodically conduct waste management training and awareness sessions for your employees who work offshore and encourage your service providers (e.g., boat operators, seismic and geophysical companies, drilling and production operators, derrick barge companies, pipeline lay barge companies) to do the same. Such training should emphasize the proper management, control, and disposal of offshore refuse.

Additionally, the GOMR commends those of you who have participated and are participating in organized efforts to remove trash and garbage from coastal shorelines. We believe that you can contribute to a broader understanding of the marine trash and debris problem by sponsoring and supporting beach cleanup and adoption programs organized by the Gulf States in cooperation with local communities and managers of coastal park and conservation areas and encouraging your employees, their family members, and youth groups to actively participate in them.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The collection of information referred to in the NTL is intended to provide clarification, description, or interpretation of requirements contained in 30 CFR Part 250, Subpart C. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the information collection requirements in these Regulations. The applicable OMB Control Number is 1010-0057. This NTL does not impose additional information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.



Chris C. Oynes
Regional Director