UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT
GULF OF AMERICA REGION

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

1. OCCURRED
   DATE: **24-FEB-2026** TIME: **1715** HOURS
2. OPERATOR: **Exxon Mobil Corporation**
   REPRESENTATIVE:
   TELEPHONE:
   CONTRACTOR: **Nabors Offshore Corporation**
   REPRESENTATIVE:
   TELEPHONE:

- [ ] STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
- [ ] CRANE
- [X] OTHER LIFTING **Buoyancy Can**
- [ ] DAMAGED/DISABLED SAFETY SYS.
- [X] INCIDENT >$25K **82,414**
- [ ] H2S/15MIN./20PPM
- [ ] REQUIRED MUSTER
- [ ] SHUTDOWN FROM GAS RELEASE
- [ ] OTHER

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

4. LEASE: **G10380**
   AREA: **AC** LATITUDE:
   BLOCK: **25** LONGITUDE:

5. PLATFORM: **A (Hoover)**
   RIG NAME: *** HYDRAULIC WORKOVER UNIT**

6. ACTIVITY:
- [ ] EXPLORATION(POE)
- [ ] DEVELOPMENT/PRODUCTION(DOCD/POD)
- [X] DECOMMISSIONING

7. TYPE:
   INJURIES:
- [ ] HISTORIC INJURY

	OPERATOR	CONTRACTOR
[ ] REQUIRED EVACUATION		
[ ] LTA (1-3 days)		
[ ] LTA (>3 days)		
[ ] RW/JT (1-3 days)		
[ ] RW/JT (>3 days)		
[ ] FATALITY		
[ ] Other Injury		

- [ ] POLLUTION
- [ ] FIRE
- [ ] EXPLOSION

LWC
- [ ] HISTORIC BLOWOUT
- [ ] UNDERGROUND
- [ ] SURFACE
- [ ] DEVERTER
- [ ] SURFACE EQUIPMENT FAILURE OR PROCEDURES

COLLISION [ ] HISTORIC [ ] >$25K [ ] <=$25K

8. OPERATION:
- [ ] PRODUCTION
- [ ] DRILLING
- [ ] WORKOVER
- [ ] COMPLETION
- [ ] HELICOPTER
- [ ] MOTOR VESSEL
- [ ] PIPELINE SEGMENT NO.
- [ ] OTHER
- [ ] TEMP ABAND
- [X] PERM ABAND
- [ ] DECOM PIPELINE
- [ ] DECOM FACILITY
- [ ] SITE CLEARANCE

9. CAUSE:
- [X] EQUIPMENT FAILURE
- [ ] HUMAN ERROR
- [ ] EXTERNAL DAMAGE
- [ ] SLIP/TRIP/FALL
- [ ] WEATHER RELATED
- [ ] LEAK
- [ ] UPSET H2O TREATING
- [ ] OVERBOARD DRILLING FLUID
- [ ] OTHER _____

10. WATER DEPTH: **4825** FT.
11. DISTANCE FROM SHORE: **137** MI.
12. WIND DIRECTION:
    SPEED: M.P.H.
13. CURRENT DIRECTION:
    SPEED: M.P.H.
14. SEA STATE: FT.
15. PICTURES TAKEN:
16. STATEMENT TAKEN:

Incident summary

On February 24, 2026, at approximately 1715 hours, during abandonment operations located at Exxon Mobile Corporation's (Exxon) Alaminos Canyon 25, Hoover Spar, a lifting incident occurred when the abandonment crew was cutting the 13-3/8 inch outer riser on the HA002 well which caused damage to the Custom Designed Pulling Unit's (CDPU) rotary table support beams. No injuries or pollution occurred because of the incident.

On 11/20/2025 a dedicated riser removal workshop was conducted by Exxon with participation from third party companies. The workshop included buoyancy calculation methodology which was developed by a third party engineering consulting firm and reviewed by Exxon and Nabors contractor during the workshop.

This was the first 13-3/8 inch outer riser cut made by the Nabor's abandonment crew. A red zone was established, and all safeguards were verified prior to 13-3/8 inch outer riser cutting operation. A 4-1/2 inch drill pipe with attached spear and mechanical cutter was run into the hole. The spear was engaged on the 13-3/8 inch outer riser and tension (over pull) was applied. At 1715 hours the 13- 3/8 inch outer riser was successfully cut at 4,941 feet MD. Once the outer riser was cut at 4,941feet, the stem/ buoyancy can began to move upward. The stem's up-stop impacted the deck stopper. The deck stopper is secured to the SPAR's deck with (24) 1-3/8 inch bolts. The stem's up-stop impacted with enough force to cause the 1-3/8 inch bolts to fail. The stem continued to rise 90 feet through the CDPU substructure and stopped when it reached the wellhead work platform located on top of the stem/buoyancy can where it impacted the CDPU's rotary table support beams. This caused damage to the rotary support beams on the CDPU, wellhead platform, and the stem/buoyancy can's nitrogen supply lines. The damaged nitrogen lines allowed the stem/ buoyancy can to slowly descend to the stem's down- stop and rest on the deck-stop/ SPAR deck as nitrogen leaked out. The spear disengaged on the 13 3/8 inch outer riser, remaining in place, and when the stem/buoyancy can descended it reengaged the 13 3/8 inch outer riser. No video recording was available of the incident.

On 3/5/2026 Lake Jackson District Accident Investigator and Supervisory Inspector interviewed Exxon Representative onsite at the time of the incident and took pictures of the equipment, area layout, and daily report for the day of the incident. During the interview, the Exxon Representative stated that the top of the stem took approximately 45-60 seconds to travel 90 feet before impacting the rotary support beams and the work string did not move after cutting the 13-3/8 inch outer riser. Investigators interviewed the Hoover Spar's Ballast Control Officer (BCO) during the incident, the Hoover Spar's BCO was responsible for controlling the nitrogen in the stem/buoyancy can. The Hoover SPAR's BCO stated the procedures were followed and pressures were verified. The Exxon Representative and Nabors crew members stated they were following approved procedures and knew they had positive pressure in the buoyancy can during riser cutting operations. The decision to apply the positive buoyancy was due to the concern by Exxon Production Engineers that the SPAR deck's structural condition in the moon pool area may not be suitable to take the weight of the stem/buoyancy can and it allowed convenient access to the wellhead platform for Nabor's personnel. Following the incident, Exxon's analysis of the SPAR deck's structural condition to handle the weight of the stem/buoyancy can was deemed acceptable. The stem/buoyancy can weight was found to be only 2% of load rating of the SPAR deck.

Buoyancy cans are double wall hollow cylinders with an 11 foot outer dimeter and a 50 inch inner diameter. The lower can is 204 feet long with (2) guides, the middle can is 54 feet long and the upper can is 48 feet long with (1) guide. The Buoyancy Stem is 51 inches in diameter and 102 feet long. The total length of the stem/ buoyancy can assembly is approximately 415 feet. Vent holes are present in stem/cans at various locations to allow sea water passage. A (1) psi pressure in any of the buoyancy cans provides approximately (11) kips of buoyancy. (1) psi pressure in stem provides approximately (1.8) kips of buoyancy. When the stem moves up, it can move until the up- stop impacts the deck stopper. When stem/can moves down, it can move until the down-stop rests on the deck stopper. An Excel-based buoyancy calculator was developed with support from a third-party engineering company, using all available design and operational data to estimate the stem/cans buoyancy force and define the required adjustments prior to cutting and pulling the riser. Stem/cans pressures were bled down to the recommended minimum values, keeping the system in minimal positive buoyancy to ensure stabilization and to prevent any sudden drop of the riser to the down-stop.

The deck stopper is connected to deck guide with (24) 1-3/8 inch grade A325 bolts. The force required to break a single 1-3/8 inch grade A325 bolt is exceptionally high, with a nominal tensile capacity of (69) KIPS. The deck stopper assembly was designed for a maximum upward force of (1,300) KIPS. The procedure indicated an allowable overpull on the drill string of 35-125 KIPS, based on observations while cutting.

During the meeting with Exxon on 4/14/2026, Exxon representatives stated they could not provide documentation for the installation of the stem/buoyancy cans due to the age of the facility. It was also stated that they could not provide information on when the last inspection of the deck stopper bolts was carried out. The decision to use positive buoyancy and tension on the work string while cutting the 13-5/8 inch outer riser was because they were worried about placing excessive weight on the SPAR deck. Deck stopper bolts were sent to a third party for evaluation.
The experience gained from HA002 revealed that attempting to cut the riser while maintaining positive buoyancy just above neutral weight using the stem/buoyancy cans presents notable risks. These risks derive from limitations in calculation accuracy and the inherent difficulties associated with maintaining precise pressure control in the field. As a result, this approach does not reliably prevent unintended riser movement following the cut on the 13 3/8 inch outer riser.
In response to these findings and after confirming through Exxon's engineering assessment that the deck was adequately rated to withstand the system load, the Exxon decommissioning team adopted a revised procedure. This method involved fully landing the stem/ buoyancy can assembly onto the down-stop before initiating the cut. Additionally, all pressure within the stem/cans is bled off completely to remove any possibility of upward movement. By eliminating residual buoyancy, this approach enhances operational stability and safety during riser cutting operations.

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

Mechanical failure - deck stopper bolts.

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

Management Systems - Inadequate hazard analysis of the deck stopper and associated hardware.

20. LIST THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Bolt analysis indicates corrosion and section loss, including localized pitting and material degradation.

Post incident the procedure was changed to remove buoyancy in the cans and allow the assembly to rest on the down stop. This prevented any additional incidents from occurring.

21. PROPERTY DAMAGED:

- Rotary table support beams
- Deck stopper bolts
- Nitrogen supply lines
- Wellhead mounted work platform and railing

NATURE OF DAMAGE:

All the damage was incurred during the uncontrolled upward and downward movement of the buoyancy stem/cans and wellhead assembly.

ESTIMATED AMOUNT (TOTAL): **$82,414**

22. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT RECURRANCE NARRATIVE:

BSEE Lake Jackson District recommends the Office of Incident Investigations to consider issuing a Safety Alert regarding decommissioning wellhead buoyancy systems.

23. POSSIBLE OCS VIOLATIONS RELATED TO ACCIDENT: **NO**

24. SPECIFY VIOLATIONS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING. NARRATIVE:

N/A

25. DATE OF ONSITE INVESTIGATION:

05-MAY-2026

26. Investigation Team Members/Panel Members:

28. ACCIDENT CLASSIFICATION:

29. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION PANEL FORMED: **NO**

27. OPERATOR REPORT ON FILE:

OCS REPORT:

30. DISTRICT SUPERVISOR:

Stephen Martinez

APPROVED DATE: **28-MAY-2026**