

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

For Public Release

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

1. OCCURRED

DATE: **05-MAY-2026** TIME: **0300** HOURS

2. OPERATOR: **GOM Shelf LLC**

REPRESENTATIVE:

TELEPHONE:

CONTRACTOR:

REPRESENTATIVE:

TELEPHONE:

- ☒ STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
☐ CRANE
☐ OTHER LIFTING
☐ DAMAGED/DISABLED SAFETY SYS.
☒ INCIDENT >\$25K **700,000**
☐ H2S/15MIN./20PPM
☐ REQUIRED MUSTER
☐ SHUTDOWN FROM GAS RELEASE
☐ OTHER

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

4. LEASE: **00134**

AREA: **GI** LATITUDE: **28.948542**

BLOCK: **48** LONGITUDE: **-90.0083377**

5. PLATFORM: **P**

RIG NAME:

6. ACTIVITY: ☐ EXPLORATION(POE)
☒ DEVELOPMENT/PRODUCTION(DOCD/POD)
☐ 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
☐ PERM ABAND
☐ DECOM PIPELINE
☐ DECOM FACILITY
☐ SITE CLEARANCE

9. CAUSE:

- ☒ EQUIPMENT FAILURE
☐ HUMAN ERROR
☐ EXTERNAL DAMAGE
☐ SLIP/TRIP/FALL
☐ WEATHER RELATED
☐ LEAK
☐ UPSET H2O TREATING
☐ OVERBOARD DRILLING FLUID
☒ OTHER Communication

10. WATER DEPTH: **85** FT.

11. DISTANCE FROM SHORE: **12** MI.

12. WIND DIRECTION: **SE**
SPEED: **29** M.P.H.

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

14. SEA STATE: FT.

15. PICTURES TAKEN:

16. STATEMENT TAKEN:

INCIDENT SUMMARY:

On 05 May 2026, at approximately 0300 hours, an allision incident occurred at the Grand Isle (GI) 48 P Platform. GI 48 P is a fixed leg platform that is owned and operated by GOM Shelf LLC (GOM Shelf). The Towing Vessel Zion M. Flagout (Zion) was in the process of transiting through the GI 48 field while towing the E P Paup Derrick Barge (Derrick Barge) when the Derrick Barge contacted the GI 48 P platform. Due to the allision, damage occurred to the Derrick Barge and the GI 48 P platform. Prior to the allision, the platform was shut in and unmanned. There were no signs of pollution or release of hydrocarbons. There were no injuries reported. At the time of the investigation, Marine Minerals Administration (MMA) personnel were operating under the former Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE). Therefore, all MMA personnel referenced in this report will be identified as BSEE personnel."

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:

During towing operations on 05 May 2026, the Zion proceeded with the towed Derrick Barge under approximately 1,250 feet of tow line. The Relief Master of the Zion Vessel assumed helm duties late in the evening, and the vessel was transiting on autopilot along a preset track toward its destination to South Pass (SP) 60 Block. In the early morning hours, the Relief Master observed multiple trawling vessels operating near the intended track and shifted to manual steering to maneuver south of the planned route. The Relief Master attempted to make communications with the trawling vessels but was unsuccessful. When returning to autopilot, the system continued to follow the altered southerly heading but required continued manual navigation by the Relief Master to maintain course.

Throughout the transit, two Zion Deckhands conducted hourly rounds and reported conditions to the bridge. At approximately 0245 hours, one of the deckhands entered the wheelhouse and observed the towing vessel transiting near the GI 48 P platform. The Relief Master was occupied with a phone and acknowledged the proximity to the platform, indicating that he was aware of the potential hazard. The Master was actively attempting to prevent the towed structure from impacting the platform. However, wind and current continued to act on the tow.

At approximately 0300 hours, a deckhand reported that the towed structure was very near the GI 48 P platform. The Relief Master evaluated the closest point of approach at approximately 0.5 nautical miles away and initially assessed no immediate hazard. Upon receiving notification of the tow's proximity, the towing vessel was maneuvered to starboard to increase the distance between the Derrick Barge and the platform. Despite this attempted preventative action, the prevailing wind and current continued to push the towed structure toward GI 48P. This ultimately resulted in an allision between the towed Derrick Barge and the platform. After the allision occurred, the supervisor on the Derrick Barge conducted a muster and accounted for all personnel. No injuries were reported.

Following notification of the allision, GOM Shelf deployed personnel to assess the damage to the GI 48 P platform. A Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) Inspector near the platform was later transported by boat from the GI 47 AQ platform to GI 48 P to document the damage and conducted an aerial inspection on 05 May 2026. The BSEE Inspector was unable to board the platform due to damage and unknown condition of the platform at the time. Based on these assessments, GOM Shelf determined the extent of the damage and initiated a repair plan for the GI 48 P facility.

BSEE INVESTIGATIONS:

On the morning of 05 May 2026, BSEE received an oral notification from GOM Shelf regarding the allision involving the GI 48 P platform. At 1246 hours the same day, GOM Shelf provided additional incident details via email. On 06 May 2026, GOM Shelf submitted the required electronic incident report, after which the case was assigned to a BSEE Accident Investigator (AI). Once assigned, the AI contacted the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to obtain additional information that was collected from the towing vessel Zion. BSEE and the USCG exchanged pertinent details of the incident; however, each agency conducted an independent investigation into the incident.

During the investigation, USCG Marine Casualty Investigators (Investigators) obtained witness statements and interview testimony from personnel aboard the Zion, including from the deckhands and the Relief Master. Investigators also collected the Global Towing Services, LLC Accident Report, a company memorandum dated 03 May 2022, the E P Paup USCG approved Fire and Safety Plan, photographs documenting damage to the GI 48 P platform and the Derrick Barge, and current Navaid and USCG annual inspection records for the GI 48 P facility. In addition, USCG Investigators obtained the Relief Master's personal phone records, which confirmed that the device was not in use at the time of the incident. The Relief Master confirmed that although his personal phone was not in use, he was actively using the company issued device at the time of the incident.

During USCG Investigator's interviews and witness statements taken, the deckhands reported observing the towing vessel transiting unusually close to the GI 48P platform at approximately 0245. Upon entering the bridge, one of the deckhands noted that the Relief Master was using a phone, which is against company policy, and acknowledged the vessel's proximity to the platform. According to both deckhands, the Relief Master was attempting to maneuver the tow to avoid contact between the Derrick Barge and the platform. The deckhands provided no additional relevant information but remained cooperative.

According to the USCG Interview Summary, the Relief Master stated he began helm duties at approximately 2330 on 04 May 2026. The vessel had been placed on autopilot along a pre set track line established by the Master. At approximately 0200 hours on 05 May 2026, the Relief Master diverted south of the intended course to avoid multiple trawling vessels after unsuccessful attempts to establish communication with them. When attempting to return to autopilot, the vessel continued to track south, requiring manual corrections to regain the intended route. Two deckhands were on watch at the time, conducting hourly rounds and reporting back to the Relief Master. Information obtained by the USCG Investigators during interviews also identified that the winds were 20-25 knots from the southeast.

At approximately 0300 on 05 May 2026, while calculating remaining voyage distance using the vessel's cell phone, the Relief Master was informed by a deckhand, who had just entered the bridge where the Relief Master was, that the Derrick barge was extremely close to the GI 48 P platform. Although the towing vessel maintained an approximate 0.5 mile closest point of approach, the Relief Master attempted a starboard turn to pull the barge away from the platform. Despite these efforts, prevailing wind and current conditions pushed the Derrick Barge towards the platform, resulting in contact with the GI 48 P platform. Due to the allision, there was damage sustained to the Derrick Barge's helideck, top deck where the helideck was welded/secured, helideck guardrails, and the exhaust stack for the generators. Damage sustained to the GI 48 P platform includes platform handrailing, platform crane, top deck equipment, valves, and lower-level walkways and railing.

When asked about potential prevention measures, the Relief Master stated that reducing speed when first encountering the trawling vessels and maintaining the original track north of the platform may have prevented the allision. The Relief Master noted that

platform lighting was not clearly visible during the approach, with one light appearing obstructed by platform components. No additional information was provided, and the crew remained cooperative during the investigation.

According to the Annual Aids of Navigation report conducted on 23 October 2025 and the USCG Fixed OCS Facility Inspection Report conducted on 08 June 2025, there were no discrepancies noted and all NAV-AID equipment was functioning properly at the time of the inspections. The BSEE Inspector that traveled by boat to GI 48 P was unable to board the platform due to damage, therefore was unable to physically test the NAV-AID lights at the time. The Relief Master did recall seeing lights but stated that the light seemed obstructed. Witnesses on the Zion recall hearing the foghorn which verifies it was working at the time of the allision.

IN CONCLUSION:

The allision involving the GI 48 P platform on 05 May 2026 resulted from a combination of navigational deviation, environmental forces, and delayed corrective actions during towing operations. As the towing vessel maneuvered south of its intended track to avoid nearby trawling vessels, continued manual steering and challenges in re establishing automated navigation placed the tow in an increasingly vulnerable position relative to the fixed platform. Despite attempts to regain control, the Derrick Barge ultimately contacted the GI 48 P platform. The incident resulted in equipment damage to the Derrick Barge and GI 48 P platform. No injuries, pollution, or hydrocarbon release occurred.

Investigative findings show that the bridge team encountered multiple operational distractions at critical moments, including documented use of a phone by the individual acting as Master during navigation near the platform. This action was inconsistent with company policy prohibiting the use of personal or vessel phone while operating the vessel, a measure intended to maintain situational awareness and prevent lapses in navigational judgment. Witness statements confirmed that environmental conditions, limited visibility of platform lighting, and the delayed return to the intended track line contributed to the allision.

Improvement opportunities include reinforcing strict adherence to company policies that prohibit phone use during vessel operation, ensuring greater vigilance when deviating from pre planned track lines, and reducing speed earlier when encountering fishing vessel activity or other navigational hazards. Strengthening bridge resource management, improving communication between crew members during abnormal conditions, and maintaining heightened situational awareness when towing near fixed structures will support the prevention of similar incidents in the future.

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

Human Performance Error: Inattention to task- Because the Master was engaged in unauthorized mobile phone use while on the bridge, in violation of company policy, the Master's attention was diverted from maintaining proper vessel heading.

Human Performance Error: Not fully aware of hazards- The Master underestimated the immediate hazard posed by the vessel and barge's proximity to the platform and did not adequately account for environmental factors influencing the vessel's trajectory.

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

Communication: Inattentiveness during communication- The Master did not fully recognize or appropriately assess the seriousness of the warnings communicated by the deckhands, resulting in a failure to respond with the necessary level of urgency.

20. LIST THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

21. PROPERTY DAMAGED:

NATURE OF DAMAGE:

GI 48 P Platform/ E P Paup Derrick Barge

Broken, Bent

\$700,000.00 USD (GI 48 P) / \$1,000,000.00 USD (E P Paup Derrick barge). Combined total costs of damages \$1,700,000.00 USD

ESTIMATED AMOUNT (TOTAL): **\$1,700,000**

22. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT RECCURANCE NARRATIVE:

BSEE New Orleans District has no recommendations for the Office of Incident Investigations at this time.

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

24. SPECIFY VIOLATIONS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING. NARRATIVE:

25. DATE OF ONSITE INVESTIGATION:

28. ACCIDENT CLASSIFICATION:

26. Investigation Team Members/Panel Members: 29. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION PANEL FORMED:
NO

27. OPERATOR REPORT ON FILE:

OCS REPORT:

30. DISTRICT SUPERVISOR:

Brody Vial

APPROVED
DATE:

27-JUL-2026