

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

NTL No. 98-13

Effective Date: August 10, 1998

NOTICE TO LESSEES AND OPERATORS OF FEDERAL OIL AND GAS LEASES
IN THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF, GULF OF MEXICO OCS REGION

Minimizing Oil and Gas Structures in the Gulf of Mexico

This Notice To Lessees and Operators (NTL) supersedes NTL No. 85-08 and updates the cited regulatory authorities and includes a statement regarding the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

Introduction

This NTL is provided pursuant to the authority prescribed in 30 CFR 250.104. In accordance with the provisions of 30 CFR 250.105(a), 250.202, 250.1009(c)(9), 256.76, and the section of the lease agreement pertaining to removal of property on termination of the lease, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) has established a program that ensures that exploratory, development, and production operations are conducted in a manner that promotes the multiple use concept of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in the Gulf of Mexico. The purpose of this NTL is to consolidate, clarify, and formalize existing requirements contained in the Regulations. This NTL does not impose additional requirements.

Policy

Structures for drilling, development, and production, including pipelines, will be kept to the minimum necessary for proper exploration, development, and production and, to the greatest extent consistent therewith, will be placed so as to cause minimum interference with other significant uses of the OCS. Accordingly, no exploration or development plan filed pursuant to 30 CFR 250.203 and 250.204 will be approved until the MMS has determined that the structures proposed in the plan are necessary for the proper exploration, development, and production of the leased area and that no other reasonable alternative placement or grouping of these structures would cause less interference with other significant uses of the OCS.

Permanent Abandonment of Wells

Please refer to 30 CFR 250.702.

Temporary Abandonment of Wells

Please refer to 30 CFR 250.703 and NTL No. 90-09.

Platform Abandonment

Please refer to 30 CFR 250.913.

Pipeline Abandonment

Please refer to 30 CFR 250.1006. The lease operator or right-of-way holder will be responsible for the removal of a pipeline abandoned in place if it is subsequently determined that the pipeline constitutes an unreasonable hazard to navigation, fishing, or the marine environment.

Removal of Property on Termination of Lease

Within a period of 1 year after termination of a lease, all temporarily abandoned wells, platforms, pipelines, or any other devices will be abandoned in accordance with the aforementioned requirements. However, in accordance with 30 CFR 250.107 and after proper approval, the operator may maintain these structures in order to conduct operations on other leases. Furthermore, MMS may consider a waiver of this requirement on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with 30 CFR 250.103(b), when such structures may be valuable as an artificial reef for the protection of fish and other aquatic life and for the conservation of natural resources.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The collections of information referred to in this NTL are contained in 30 CFR Part 250, Subparts A, B, G, I, and J and 30 CFR Part 256. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the information collection requirements in these Regulations. The applicable OMB Control Numbers are: 1010-0030 for Subpart A; 1010-0049 for Subpart B; 1010-0079 for Subpart G; 1010-0058 for Subpart I; 1010-0050 for Subpart J; and 1010-0006 for Part 256. This NTL does not impose additional information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.



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