

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

NTL No. 96-05

September 20, 1996

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

Departures for Testing Blowout Preventers (BOP)

In early April 1996, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) began granting departures for testing BOP equipment on a 14-day interval. The purpose for these departures was to gather data on BOP performance. The MMS and five oil and gas trade organizations hired a contractor to analyze these data and prepare a report on BOP performance. The MMS will use the study to determine if a 14-day test interval provides an equal or better degree of protection, safety, and performance when compared to the current requirement for a 7-day test interval.

The contractor now has sufficient data to complete the study. The results of the study should be available in mid-December 1996. The MMS plans to hold a workshop in mid-January 1997 to discuss the results of the study and obtain industry input on appropriate BOP testing requirements. Subsequently, MMS plans to make a decision about revised BOP testing requirements by mid-February 1997.

Therefore, MMS will stop granting departures that allow the testing of BOP equipment at intervals up to 14 days between tests.

For wells spudded on or after October 1, 1996, lessees must comply with 30 CFR 250.57(e). For wells spudded prior to October 1, 1996, lessees may continue testing BOP equipment according to the approved conditions.

[signed] Donald C. Howard
Regional Supervisor
Field Operations

