

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

NTL No. 98-08

Effective Date: August 10, 1998

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

Meteorological Data Collection (Breton National Wildlife Refuge/Wilderness Area)

This notice supersedes Notice to Lessees and Operators (NTL) 97-02, dated January 23, 1997, and amends the title, deletes the specific compliance deadlines, updates the cited regulatory authorities, and includes a statement regarding the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

Some interests have expressed concerns that emissions from OCS activities may be significantly affecting the air quality of the Breton National Wildlife Refuge/Wilderness Area (BWA), a Prevention of Significant Deterioration Class I Area. To determine whether or not this is the case, the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region (GOMR) has decided to perform an air quality analysis. The first step in performing this analysis is to develop an accurate and current air pollutant emissions inventory, which is underway. The next step is to collect meteorological data.

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority of 30 CFR 250.303(l), 30 CFR 250.304(h), 30 CFR 250.203(o), and 30 CFR 250.204(s) lessees and operators of each lease located within 100 kilometers of the BWA (see Attachment for a list of affected OCS blocks) are hereby directed to collect and report meteorological data for each affected lease in accordance with the following procedures:

(1) Using state-of-the-art equipment, measure wind speed and direction, ambient air temperature, sea temperature, dew point temperature, and atmospheric pressure at the sea surface in accordance with standard National Weather Service procedures for surface meteorological observations as detailed in the Field Meteorological Handbook-1 (FMH-1). The measurements will be encoded as hourly values using the standard Surface-Air (SA) format (see FMH-1). The data must be collected at a frequency sufficient to allow the computation of hourly averages accurately and precisely and the production of statistically robust averages. After the necessary quality control has been performed, these values, along with any recorded raw data such as strip charts, will be forwarded monthly to the GOMR, Leasing and Environment, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, MS 5441, Attention: Ms. Terry Scholten. The surface meteorological data collection will begin to coincide with the air pollutant emissions inventory and continue for a period of one year thereafter.

(2) Establish an upper air station to measure wind speed and direction, ambient air temperature, dew point temperature, and atmospheric pressure at standard and significant heights. This station will be capable of either launching upper air-balloon soundings (radiosondes) twice daily (0000 and 1200 GMT) or using a radar profiler acoustic sounder that will collect the necessary data at least hourly. The collected upper air data will be encoded in standard upper air code as prescribed by the National Weather Service. The mixing heights will also be determined. After the necessary quality control has been performed, the encoded observations, the mixing heights, and the raw data will be forwarded monthly to the GOMR, Leasing and Environment, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, MS 5441, Attention: Ms. Terry Scholten. The upper air meteorological data collection will begin to coincide with the air pollutant emissions inventory and continue for a period of one year thereafter.

(3) Prepare a plan on how you will comply with the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) above. The plan will describe the equipment to be used and the quality assurance and control procedures, auditing procedures, and calibration techniques to be employed. At least 30 days prior to implementation of the meteorological data collection, you will submit this plan to the GOMR, Leasing and Environment, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, MS 5441, Attention: Ms. Terry Scholten, for approval.

(4) The formats for the monthly submissions will conform to the present procedures used by the National Climatic Data Center (contact Mr. Thomas Ross at (704) 271-4994, extension 181 for information). The data submitted will be digitized on 3.5-inch IBM-compatible diskettes in a fixed format ASCII file (one record per line). You will also include paper copies of the raw data and the encoded observations with your submittals.

Alternatively, lessees and operators may jointly submit a plan for an industry-wide meteorological data collection effort to the GOMR for approval in lieu of the lease-by-lease meteorological data collection requirements delineated above. If such an industry-wide plan is approved, its implementation will constitute compliance with this notice for those lessees and operators who participate in the effort.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The information collection provisions of this notice are intended to provide clarification, description, or interpretation of requirements contained in 30 CFR 250, Subparts B and C. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the information collection requirements for these regulations and assigned OMB Control Nos. 1010-0049 and 1010-0057, respectively. This notice does not impose additional collection information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.



Chris C. Oynes
Regional Director

Attachment

ATTACHMENT

List of Affected OCS Blocks

<u>Area Name</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Block Numbers</u>
Bay Marchand	BM	2
Breton Sound	BS	24, 25, 39-44, 53-56
Chandeleur	CA	1, 3-5, 8-44
Destin Dome	DD	1, 45, 89, 133, 177, 221
Grand Isle	GI	15-48, 52-59, 65-69, 79
Mississippi Canyon	MC	20-34, 63-77, 103-104, 107-121, 147-163, 190-206, 234-249, 277-292, 316-334, 360-363, 363A, 364-376, 408-416
Mobile	MO	765-767, 778-779, 809-824, 826-830, 853-874, 897-918, 942-962, 987-1006
Main Pass	MP	6, 7, 17-20, 27-30, 37-44, 55-65, 68-74, 77, 78, 86-252, 257-316
Pensacola	PE	881, 925, 969
South Pass	SP	6, 17-19, 27-29, 31-39, 42-96
Viosca Knoll	VK	20-38, 65-82, 109-126, 154-170, 201-214, 246-258, 292-302, 338-346, 383-390, 427-434, 473-477, 518-521, 564-565, 692-695, 734-739, 772-782, 813-825, 856-868, 898-911, 940-954, 983-997
West Delta	WD	16-50, 56-81, 85-136, 139-154