

The NewsRoom

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MMS Requires Inspection of Facilities Impacted by Hurricane Katrina

Washington, DC - The Minerals Management Service has issued a [Notice to Operators, Lessees and Pipeline Right-of-Way Holders](#) describing the inspections and reports necessary as a result of Hurricane Katrina damage. Following a hurricane, MMS routinely requires companies to survey OCS facilities for any damage and report all work completed as a result of this damage.

“An important part of the MMS’ regulatory responsibility is safety,” said Chris Oynes, Gulf of Mexico Regional Director of Offshore Energy and Minerals Management. “We are encouraged that there were no significant oil spills from wells associated with Hurricane Katrina and that strong work by the oil and gas industry is bringing production back fairly quickly. Nevertheless, we must ensure that the resumption of operation in the Gulf of Mexico meets all MMS standards for human and environmental safety.”

According to the notice published by MMS, today, all operators, lessees and pipeline right-of-way holders must conduct periodic inspections of their facilities. These inspections require an above-water visual inspection, a general underwater visual inspection by divers or remotely operated vehicles, and an underwater visual inspection of areas of known or suspected damage.

The notice also encourages the inspection of older platforms first, beginning with those closest to the eye of the storm path and then moving outward. Inspections must be completed by May 1, 2006. All work to correct any damage found should be completed by June 1, 2006.

Companies are further advised not to man the facilities until all necessary analysis and repairs are completed. MMS approval is needed for major repairs to be completed.

MMS will review the initial inspection plans and advise each company as to the acceptability of their plans. The companies are required to report the status of their inspections and repairs the first Friday of each month.

The notice also addressed inspections of pipeline routes including pipeline tie-in and crossings, pipeline risers, and pipeline steel catenary risers.

MMS, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, oversees 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf, managing offshore energy and minerals while protecting the human, marine, and coastal environments. The OCS provides 30 percent of oil and 21 percent of natural gas produced domestically, as well as sand used for coastal restoration. MMS collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian lands, and contributes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other special use funds, with Fiscal Year 2004 disbursements of about \$8 billion and more than \$143 billion since 1982.

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