



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region**

Notice No. 085

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OCS Operations Safety Alert

Fire -- Two Fatalities

A fire recently occurred on an offshore production platform while gas pressure was being bled to the atmosphere from the casing of two wells. A workboat, with ten men aboard, was moored to the platform. The gas bleeding operation caused a gas plume to pass directly over the afterdeck of the workboat. The gas ignited and subjected the boat to intense radiant heat. Five of the men on the boat jumped overboard, and the other five remained on the boat. Two of those who jumped overboard drowned, and those who remained on the boat received burns of varying degrees.

The fire burned for approximately five minutes before two men on the platform were able to close the bleed valves. There was major damage to the boat but no damage to the wells or structure.

In order to prevent a recurrence of this type of accident, the operator has taken the following action:

Safety instructions for this specific operation have been published and will be rigidly enforced. These instructions require that boats shall not be moored to the platforms but shall be at least 150 feet upwind while performing this operation.

In the interest of further safety, the operator has done the following:

1. Personnel are receiving Red Cross supervised instruction in water survival techniques.
2. The requirement that offshore employees be competent swimmers is being reemphasized.

[signed] H.G. Frizzell

for D.W. Solanas

Oil and Gas Supervisor

Operations Support

Gulf of Mexico Area