



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

Notice No. 100

March 30, 1981

OCS Operations Safety Alert

Explosion -- Fire

A well was being killed in preparation for snubbing operations by pumping 9.3 ppg salt water into the tubing. Because of down hole communication problems, the well fluid returns were being circulated out of the casing annulus through a choke manifold and into an open mud tank.

The escaping gas exploded and the resulting fire caused severe damage to the platform. Four men were injured.

To prevent a recurrence of this type of accident, the operator will install a gas separator ("gas buster") in the return line upstream of the mud tank. The vent from this separator will be piped to a safe area. Additionally, the operator will inspect wiring and equipment in the area of the mud tank to eliminate ignition sources.

[signed] D.W. Solanas

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Offshore Operations Support

Gulf of Mexico OCS Region