



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

Notice No. 131

July 20, 1984

OCS Operations Safety Alert

Pollution

The overnight testing of a well on an unmanned platform, combined with the failure of two safety devices, resulted in the discharge of approximately 25 barrels of crude oil into Gulf of Mexico waters.

The well was being tested through a header into a test separator. Another line from the header into the flare scrubber was secured with a shutdown valve at the header in the closed position. However, it was discovered subsequently that the "O" rings in this valve's actuator were dry and the valve would not completely close, thereby causing a portion of the well stream to flow into the flare scrubber. The flare scrubber did not experience a high level problem because it dumped the oil into a holding tank. The holding tank, which was not protected by a level safety high, overflowed into the Gulf through a vent while also overflowing into the sump tank through a 2-inch overflow pipe. The sump tank experienced a high level situation, but the valve for the level-safety high sensor failed to activate the platform shutdown system. The sump tank pump was unable to handle the volume it was receiving and the sump also overflowed into the Gulf.

To prevent a recurrence of this type of pollution accident, the operator has made the following changes:

1. Well testing will be done only in daylight hours.
2. A pipeline will be used to transmit well fluids to a manned platform for testing.
3. Proper lubricants will be used on all safety devices.

[signed] D.W. Solanas

Regional Supervisor

Rules and Production

Gulf of Mexico OCS Region