



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

Notice No. 153

February 12, 1988

Fire Caused by Cutting Torch Used to Cut Tubing

On November 2, 1987, a flash fire occurred on a lift boat that was being used to plug and abandon a well. A cutting torch was being used to cut the tubing string as it was being removed from the well. Condensate had been trapped below a tubing pack-off assembly located in the tubing string. The condensate trapped below the pack off ignited during an attempt to cut the tubing with the torch.

The Code of Federal Regulations, 30 CFR, Section 250.46, Safe and Workmanlike Operations, requires the lessee to perform all operations in a safe and workmanlike manner and take all necessary precautions to control, remove, or otherwise correct any hazardous oil and gas accumulation or other safety, health, or fire hazard.

Minerals Management Service has determined that using a cutting torch to cut tubing as it is being removed from the wellbore does not conform to Section 250.46. This practice should not be used because the potential exists for a flash fire.