



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

Safety Alert No. 188  
May 2, 2000

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### **Fire with Fatality and Injury**

As part of the deactivation of a platform's process drain line system, a construction employee was in the process of cutting a separator's drain line with an electric band saw when condensate sprayed from the cut onto the employee and was ignited by the saw. The employee died days later from the resultant burns. Another employee was injured in his attempts to assist the fatally burned employee. The source of the condensate was the platform's fuel gas scrubber whose drain line's manual block valve was opened during the referenced construction operations. The opening of the valve and the decision of the construction employees to use the saw after previous attempts by the same employees to cut the line resulted in the spraying of condensate from the cut are considered major causes of the accident. Contributing in part to the accident were (1) a lack of procedural guidelines for the construction work to be performed, (2) misunderstandings and erroneous assumptions regarding the hot work permit, (3) a lack of adequate communication between designated operator and contractor personnel and among contractor personnel themselves, and (4) a relative unfamiliarity with the platform process equipment on the part of a contractor employee.

Therefore, from this information and information contained in the MMS report on the subject accident, the following are recommended:

1. Operators review their established procedure for coordinating proposed multiple work assignments for any facility. Operators should establish such a procedure, as described above, if one does not exist.
2. Operators provide general written procedures for all construction projects, including an emphasis on safety issues. The procedures should address all aspects of the job that have been identified, through the results of a job safety analysis, as being potentially hazardous. For example, in the case of construction work to be performed on process piping, the procedures should address, but certainly not be limited to, the isolation of all relevant energy sources by, at a minimum, blinding, disconnecting, or double block and bleeding, and the purging of all involved lines prior to cutting.
3. Operators review the method by which they monitor their contractors' adherence to all agreed upon safety standards and requisite Federal regulations.

For details of the accident, see OCS Report MMS 2000-029. Copies of the report may be obtained from the MMS Public Information Office located at 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123 (1-800-200-GULF or local 504-736-2519).

–GOMR–MMS–

Visit our Safety Information Website:

<http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/offshore/safety/safety.html>