

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Office of Communications**

FOR RELEASE: May 9, 1996

CONTACT: Tom DeRocco
(202) 208-3983

Innovation 9

MMS Cooperation with National Response Center Reduces Duplicate Reporting for Industry

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today that it will no longer require reporting of oil spills of less than a barrel, effective May 31. Ninety-five percent (95%) of current reports concern spills of less than one barrel. MMS has arranged with the National Response Center, which is staffed by the U.S. Coast Guard, to forward to MMS reports of offshore spills. MMS, in turn, will now only require lessees to notify MMS directly for spills of one barrel or more, thereby reducing the number of spills reported to MMS by more than 95 percent.

"This simple, common sense, change dramatically reduces industries' reporting requirements while not compromising our environmental stewardship of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "We realize that just as industry works together to maximize their shareholders' investment, it is important that agencies across government work together. It's good for taxpayers, industry, and the federal agencies themselves."

Under current MMS procedures, lessees and operators must report directly to MMS all oil spills from offshore facilities, regardless of volume. Additionally, lessees as well as others, must also report all spills of oil or spills of hazardous substances into any body of water to the National Response Center. This includes spills into wetlands, lakes, streams, rivers, and navigable waters offshore out to approximately 200 miles.

MMS will continue to require operators to report directly to the agency oil spills of one barrel or more, thereby giving MMS more time to work with the operator to handle the situation.

MMS is the federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects, accounts for and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

-MMS-