

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
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INNOVATION 16

MMS Revises Testing Requirements For Blowout Preventers

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today notified lessees and operators of federal oil and gas leases in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) that the agency is revising a part of the testing requirements for blowout preventer (BOP) systems and equipment.

"MMS has been evaluating BOP testing requirements at the request of the oil and gas industry since 1993," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. "After a 1994 performance study showed some differences from industry data, we worked with industry to set parameters for a second study. MMS participated with the American Petroleum Institute, Independent Petroleum Association of America, International Association of Drilling Contractors, National Ocean Industries Association, and Offshore Operators Committee in selecting a contractor for the study. This was a true partnership effort and allows us to use sound science to support our requirements"

The study concluded that no statistical difference in failure rates exists between BOP's tested every seven days and those tested between the 8-to-14-day interval. Based upon this study, MMS will allow up to 14 days between BOP tests; this is effective January 31, 1997. It does not apply, however, to any workover activities, and MMS reserves the right to specify a shorter testing timeframe when warranted. MMS will begin the rulemaking process to incorporate these requirements into existing regulations.

Agency officials believe the change will save industry an estimated \$20-\$30 million a year; industry estimates are nearly double.

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.

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