



**U.S. Department of the Interior  
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### **MMS Issues New Well Naming and Numbering Standards**

As part of its two-year Innovative Achievements Program, the Minerals Management Service has developed new well naming and numbering standards to simplify and clarify well identification and data storage. The new approach will result in significant cost and man-hour savings for MMS and perhaps as much as 10 to 15 percent of data processing costs for industry.

"The problems and flaws associated with the existing OCS oil and gas well naming and numbering standards are widely acknowledged throughout industry. These deficiencies have resulted in significant, longstanding problems associated with well identification, data storage and database management," explained MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman. These new standards will prevent the loss of time and money resulting from mistakes arising from unclear identification of wellbores.

The MMS recently issued a Notice to Lessees and Operators (NTL # 97-2N) of federal oil and gas leases in the Outer Continental Shelf advising them of the new numbering standards. The goals of the revised and improved standards and practices are: (1) to ensure that all wellbores in the OCS, including bypasses, sidetracks, redrills, and well deepening, are assigned a unique, consistent identifying number; and (2) to address recent naming and numbering challenges posed by new technology wellbores such as multilateral, horizontal, and downhole splitter wells. The new standards apply to all wellbores drilled in the future and will facilitate the numbering of 8,000-10,000 historic wellbores that were never assigned API numbers. This will be accomplished without having to change any well numbers already assigned.

Quarterman further explained, "The implementation of these standards and the resulting assignment of unique, consistent identifying numbers for all wellbores in the OCS will eliminate errors associated with inconsistent and unmatched wellbore numbers used by various operators, petroleum information companies, industry groups, and regulators. The improvements will benefit industry groups and will allow MMS to more effectively and efficiently serve its customers."

In developing the new standards, a team of MMS employees from the Gulf of Mexico Region held meetings with industry representatives and other customers during an extensive comment-gathering period. The draft standards were also distributed through industry organizations and information services to ensure maximum exposure and opportunity for comment before the final standards were issued. Comments received were reviewed and incorporated into the final

document. Director Quarterman noted, "By addressing the concerns of its customers, the MMS produced a set of standards that will meet everyone's needs."

The MMS is a Federal Agency that manages and regulates 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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