

INNOVATION #3

FOR RELEASE: November 22, 1995

CONTACT: Tom DeRocco
(202) 208-3983

Barney Congdon
(504) 736-2595

MMS SCHEDULES TRAINING PROGRAM FOR WELL- CONTROL AND PRODUCTION-SAFETY SYSTEMS

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) has announced that it will hold a public workshop and pilot testing training on well-control and production-safety systems on December 6, 1995, at the MMS Gulf of Mexico Regional Office in New Orleans.

"The program, designed for natural gas, oil and sulphur lessee and contract operators engaged in operations in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), will allow MMS to assess the training and testing received by employees of OCS lessee and contract operators," said MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman.

"MMS is working to simplify the training options. We want to provide the flexibility to use alternative training methods, and provide the option to allow third parties to certify training programs," Quarterman added.

The MMS training program follows a November 2, 1995, Federal Register notice setting forth proposed revisions to current regulations. Among other elements, that notice outlined:

- * the type and frequency of training lessees and contractors must obtain for their employees;
- * the documentation to be provided to employees;
- * training guidelines and exceptions;
- * alternative training methods and certification of training programs;
- * testing methodology; and,
- * reporting requirements.

The December 6 program will include a session on the proposal to allow third parties to accredit worker training programs; currently, MMS accredits these programs. The MMS also will present a summary of the third-party accreditation comments

received in response to a Federal Register notice published August 5, 1994. These options range from MMS accrediting third parties to having non-profit organizations accredit them. The workshop will provide an additional opportunity to discuss third-party options.

There will be no admission fee for the program. Seating is limited, however, and registration will be on a first-come, first-seated basis. To register, contact Wilbon Rhome, Information and Training Branch, at (703) 787-1587 or FAX (703) 787-1575.

The program will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard (Rooms 111 and 115), New Orleans, Louisiana.

The 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-