



**U.S. Department of the Interior  
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***NEWS RELEASE***

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**Improved Incident Reporting Requirements Proposed For A Safer Offshore Working Environment**

The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service today published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) in the *Federal Register* that revises the current MMS requirements for reporting incidents associated with oil, natural gas and other mineral operations on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). If finalized, the proposed revisions will make the reporting process more consistent and lead to a safer working environment.

"MMS has worked diligently with the U.S. Coast Guard to develop the revised reporting requirements," said MMS Director Johnnie Burton "The revised requirements will benefit MMS, the Coast Guard and the regulated community as a whole, and will provide MMS with the information needed to further promote safety on the OCS."

The NPR adds more specific reporting thresholds and definitions that will clarify the types of incidents to be reported. This will enable MMS to gather more consistent information about incidents associated with OCS minerals activities and will improve the agency's ability to identify unsafe equipment, procedures and human and organizational factors that may cause incidents. The proposal would revise MMS rules in the Code of Federal Regulations (30CFR 250.191).

MMS and the USCG signed a Memorandum of Understanding on December 16, 1998 to minimize duplication of reports and to promote consistent regulation of OCS facilities. Accordingly, MMS developed the proposed rule in conjunction with the USCG to include requirements that are as mutually consistent as possible for incidents where both the agencies have an interest and responsibility. In developing the rule, MMS and the USCG also consulted with offshore industry representatives through participation in a subcommittee sponsored by the USCG's National Offshore Safety Advisory Committee.

The NPR also includes a requirement that reports be submitted electronically. MMS and the USCG are working together to develop a single point electronic reporting system that will allow reports to be sent to both agencies, thus minimizing duplicative reporting currently required by the two agencies.

The NPR calls for a 90-day comment period. A joint MMS/USCG workshop will be held on the proposed rule in New Orleans, LA in early September of 2003.

MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from federal and American Indian leases. These revenues totaled over \$6 billion in 2002 and nearly \$127 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and federal park and recreation lands.

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MMS Internet website address: <http://www.boem.gov>