

## The NewsRoom

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### **Final Rule on Outer Continental Shelf Plans and Information to Streamline Processing**

WASHINGTON-The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service today published in the federal register a final rule which reorganizes and updates the requirements and processes for submitting plans for oil and natural gas exploration, development, and production on the Outer Continental Shelf. "This final rule, will help ensure that plans submitted to MMS for approval contain all the necessary information required for MMS to process them in a more streamlined and efficient manner," said MMS Director Johnnie Burton.

The final rule, Oil and Gas and Sulphur Operations in the Outer Continental Shelf—Plans and Information, contains the new requirements and processes for submitting to MMS, for review and approval, various plans and information related to offshore oil and gas operations. The final rule will become effective on September 29, 2005.

The previous regulations at 30 CFR part 250, subpart B, were structured into five broad sections: General Requirements, Preliminary Activities, Well Location and Spacing, Exploration Plans (EPs), and Development and Production Plans (DPPs). This rule reorganizes and clarifies the requirements pertaining to EPs, DPPs, and Development Operations Coordination Documents (DOCDs). It also adds sections to describe Deepwater Operations Plans (DWOPs) and Conservation Information Documents (CIDs).

On September 29, 2005, in conjunction with the implementation of the final rule, MMS will issue a companion Notice to Lessees (NTL) for the Gulf of Mexico Region. This NTL will further interpret the requirements in the rule regarding the information a lessee or operator must submit for MMS determinations, analyses, and approvals of EPs and DOCDs as they would apply specifically to leases and units in the Gulf of Mexico.

MMS issued a Proposed Rule on Plans and Information on May 17, 2002, and received numerous comments, many of which were adopted in the final rule. All comments and MMS's responses are available in the final rule.

MMS, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, oversees 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf, managing offshore energy and minerals while protecting the human, marine, and coastal environments. The OCS provides 30 percent of oil and 21 percent of natural gas produced domestically, as well as sand used for coastal restoration. MMS collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian lands, and contributes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other special use funds, with Fiscal Year 2004 disbursements of about \$8 billion and more than \$143 billion since 1982.

#### **Relevant Web Sites:**

[MMS Main Website](#)

#### **Media Contacts:**

**Nicolette Nye**, (703) 787-1011

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U.S. Department of the Interior