

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE
GULF OF MEXICO OCS REGION**

NTL No. 2009-G27

Effective Date: September 9, 2009
Expiration Date: September 8, 2014

NOTICE TO LESSEES AND OPERATORS OF FEDERAL OIL, GAS, AND SULPHUR
LEASES, OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF, GULF OF MEXICO OCS REGION

**Submitting Exploration Plans and
Development Operations Coordination Documents**

This Notice to Lessees and Operators (NTL) supersedes NTL No. 2007-G11, effective April 4, 2007, on this topic. It clarifies the policy regarding revising OCS plans when you propose to change approved anchor patterns or anchor areas, provides guidance for wells you plan to side-track, makes minor administrative changes, and includes a guidance document statement.

Authority and Background

Under 30 CFR part 250, subpart B, you must submit Exploration Plans (EP's) and Development Operations Coordination Documents (DOCD's) to the Minerals Management Service (MMS). The MMS Gulf of Mexico OCS Region (GOMR) uses this information to carry out the mandate of the OCS Lands Act, as amended, that specifies that exploration or development and production activities on the OCS may not be conducted until comprehensive plans are submitted and approved. Extensive data and information are necessary to make informed decisions on whether to approve these plans or require appropriate changes.

Changing Approved and Pending EP's and DOCD's

In addition to Initial EP's and DOCD's (which are the first OCS plans to be submitted after the lease is awarded), there are four types of changes that can be made to approved and pending EP's and DOCD's. These changes are referred to as supplemental, revised, modified, and amended EP's and DOCD's (see 30 CFR 250.200(b) for definitions of these types of EP's and DOCD's).

Each supplemental and revised (in accordance with 30 CFR 250.285(b)), modified (in accordance with 30 CFR 250.234(a) and 250.273(a)), or amended (in accordance with 30 CFR 250.232(d) and 250.267(d)) EP or DOCD need only contain that information related to or affected by the proposed changes to the EP or DOCD, as approved or pending. However, make sure the description of the proposed changes (including any corresponding information) is complete and includes the rationale for the proposed changes as they relate to the approved or pending EP or DOCD. It would also be helpful if you would (1) reference the approval date or

MMS control number, if known, of the approved EP or DOCD you are changing and (2) include an updated Form MMS-137, Plan Information Form, that reflects the proposed changes, as appropriate.

1. Pursuant to 30 CFR 250.283(b), supplement your approved EP or DOCD when you propose to conduct lease or unit activities that require applications or permits and are not described in your approved EP or DOCD.

2. Pursuant to 30 CFR 250.283(a), revise your approved EP or DOCD when you propose to

A. Change the type of drilling rig to one with a different impact on the seafloor (e.g., from a platform rig to a jack-up, from a semisubmersible rig with anchors to a drillship), production facility (e.g., caisson, fixed platform with piles, tension-leg platform), or transportation mode (e.g., pipeline, barge) you will use;

B. Change the surface location of a well (or associated anchor) by more than 30 meters (100 feet) in water depths less than 400 meters (1,312 feet), or by more than 152 meters (500 feet) in water depths 400 meters (1,312 feet) or greater;

C. For DOCD's that propose activities that affect the State of Florida, change the type of production from natural gas to oil;

D. Increase the emissions of an air pollutant to an amount that exceeds the amount specified in your approved EP or DOCD;

E. Request a new hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) area classification, or encounter a concentration of H₂S greater than 500 parts per million (ppm);

F. Change the location of your onshore support base from one State to another or to a new base requiring expansion;

G. Move any anchor location more than 152 meters (500 feet) if you have an approved specific anchor array pattern associated with your activities; or

H. Increase the anchoring area radius by more than 152 meters (500 feet) if you have an approved anchoring area associated with your activities.

3. If you want to drill into a lease or unit that is not included in your approved EP or DOCD, you must submit an Initial, Supplemental, or Revised EP or DOCD, as appropriate, to the MMS GOMR for approval regardless of whether you propose to drill a completely new well or a side-track from an existing well. If you plan to drill a side-track from an existing well that does not enter a lease or unit that is not included in your approved EP or DOCD, then it is not necessary for you to submit an EP or DOCD for that activity.

Copies of EP's and DOCD's

1. Pursuant to 30 CFR 250.206, submit the following number of copies for *Initial* and *Supplemental* EP's and DOCD's to the MMS GOMR:

Initial and Supplemental EP's and DOCD's that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS that affect the:	No. of Proprietary Copies	No. of Public Information Copies	Total No. of Copies
A. State of Florida	5	17	22
B. State of Alabama	5	5	10
C. Both the States of Mississippi and Louisiana	5	6	11
D. Both the States of Mississippi and Louisiana and that are exempted from CZM certification requirements	5	4	9
E. Only the State of Louisiana	5	4	9
F. Only the State of Louisiana and that are exempted from CZM certification requirements	5	3	8
G. State of Texas	5	4	9
H. State of Texas and that are exempted from CZM certification requirements	5	3	8

2. Pursuant to 30 CFR 250.206, submit the following number of copies for *Revised*, *Modified*, and *Amended* EP's and DOCD's to the MMS GOMR:

Revised, Modified, and Amended EP's and DOCD's that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS that affect:	No. of Proprietary Copies	No. of Public Information Copies	Total No. of Copies
Any State	5	2	7

Electronic Submission

In accordance with 30 CFR 250.206(b), you may choose to submit copies of any EP or DOCD (Initial, Supplemental, Revised, Modified, or Amended) electronically. If you do, submit it as a single file on separate CD-ROM's and ensure that all electronic files are in portable document format (PDF) or other acceptable format. Make sure that the file name does not contain any breaks, underscores, or spaces. If you submit your EP or DOCD electronically, provide

1. In lieu of the five proprietary copies specified above, one proprietary copy on paper and one proprietary copy on CD-ROM; and
2. For EP's and DOCD's that propose activities that do not affect the State of Florida, one public information copy on paper, and one less than the specified number of public information copies on separate CD-ROM's; or
3. For EP's and DOCD's that propose activities that do affect the State of Florida (see Item A listed in the table in Section No. 1 above), provide 8 public information copies on paper and 11 public information copies on separate CD-ROM's.

Submittal Address

Submit all EP's and DOCD's by mailing them to:

Regional Supervisor, Field Operations
Plans Section (MS 5231)
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394

Timely Submission of EP's and DOCD's

The OCS Lands Act requires the MMS GOMR to review, analyze, and take final regulatory action on EP's and DOCD's within a relatively short period of time after their receipt. In addition, when requested, the MMS GOMR attempts to accomplish these tasks in even shorter periods to accommodate your drilling, platform installation, or pipeline construction schedules, or for other reasons. This expediting sometimes causes disruptions in the normal review and analysis process and makes it extremely difficult to meet the mandated deadlines for other OCS plans that have been submitted timely. Therefore, we seek your cooperation in ensuring that you submit all OCS plans and permit applications to the MMS GOMR sufficiently in advance to provide the MMS GOMR with the maximum review time possible.

Cost Recovery and State Coastal Zone Management Review Fees

1. Cost Recovery Fees. Effective September 1, 2006, cost recovery fees must accompany the submission of all Initial and Supplemental EP's and DOCD's to the MMS GOMR. Refer to 30 CFR 250.125 and 250.126 for information on fee amounts and payment instructions.

2. Coastal Zone Management Review Fees. The States of Louisiana and Alabama require a fee in order to process a consistency certification for an EP or DOCD that affects their respective State. Information on the fees required by the State of Louisiana can be found on the Internet Web site at <http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=103638>. Information on fees required by the State of Alabama can be found in Schedule B on the Internet Web site at <http://www.adem.state.al.us/Regulations/Div1/Div1Effective5-26-09.pdf>.

Guidance Document Statement

The MMS issues NTL's as guidance documents in accordance with 30 CFR 250.103 to clarify, supplement, and provide more detail about certain MMS regulatory requirements and to outline the information you provide in your various submittals. Under that authority, this NTL sets forth a policy on and an interpretation of a regulatory requirement that provides a clear and consistent approach to complying with that requirement. However, if you wish to use an alternate approach for compliance, you may do so, after you receive approval from the appropriate MMS office under 30 CFR 250.141.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 Statement

The information collection referred to in this NTL is intended to provide clarification, description, or interpretation of requirements contained in 30 CFR 250, subparts A and B. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the information collection requirements in this regulation under OMB Control Numbers 1010-0114 and 1010-0151, respectively. This NTL does not impose any information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

Contact

Please contact the MMS GOMR Plans Section at (504) 736-2581 if you have any questions regarding this NTL.

[original signed]

Lars T. Herbst
Regional Director