

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE**

NTL No. 2002-G08

Effective Date: August 29, 2002

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

**Information Requirements for Exploration Plans and  
Development Operations Coordination Documents**

This Notice to Lessees and Operators (NTL) supersedes NTL No. 2000-G21, issued on December 26, 2000. The table below summarizes the changes. The purpose of this NTL is to provide guidance on preparing EP's and DOCD's that are required by *current* 30 CFR 250, Subpart B regulations. (Although this NTL becomes effective on August 29, 2002, we will continue to accept EP's and DOCD's prepared according to the guidance in NTL No. 2000-G21 until November 29, 2002.)

Please note that the Minerals Management Service (MMS) published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) to restructure and revise the current Subpart B regulations (May 17, 2002, FR 35372-35396). In connection with the proposed rulemaking, the MMS GOMR developed a draft companion NTL to provide guidance on the proposed regulations. The draft NTL is posted with the NPR on the MMS Internet website at <http://www.mms.gov/federalregister/2002.htm> for review, and we welcome your comments on both documents.

NTL Part	Description of Change
Proprietary Information	New section outlining what information covered in this NTL is considered proprietary. When applicable, each Appendix now also identifies the proprietary information described in that Appendix.
General Requirements for EP's and DOCD's	Clarifies reasons for revising OCS plans; adds thresholds when possible; and deletes two reasons previously included in NTL No. 2000-G21.  Discusses how OCS plans may now be submitted on CD-ROM, and recommends at least one proprietary and one public information copy be submitted in this format.
<a href="#">Appendix A</a>	Amends guidelines on Location to make it clear that you should give either anchor locations or anchor radius for construction barges or semisubmersible drilling rigs in Item (B).
<a href="#">Appendix B</a>	For DOCD's:  Deletes discussion of "Socioeconomic Information" (paragraph (H) in NTL No. 2000-G21).  Clarifies the guidelines for submitting information on "Related OCS facilities and operations" and "Transportation information."
<a href="#">Appendix C</a>	Under Geological and Geophysical Information for both EP's and DOCD's:  Paragraph (C) – Removes the phrase "... corresponding to each seismic line submitted in paragraph (B) of this section..."  Paragraph (E) – Adds "non-proprietary shallow hazards assessment for plans that require Coastal Zone Management consistency."  Paragraph (F) – Reduces copies of the "two closest high-resolution survey lines" to a copy of "one high-resolution survey line."



	<u>Geophysical Information</u>	Information
<a href="#">Appendix D</a>	None	N/A
<a href="#">Appendix E</a>	None	N/A
<a href="#">Appendix F</a>	None	N/A
<a href="#">Appendix G</a>	None	N/A
<a href="#">Appendix H</a>	None	N/A
<a href="#">Appendix I</a>	None	N/A
<a href="#">Appendix J</a>	BHL, TVD, MD information	Geological Information

## General Requirements for EP's and DOCD's

Before you conduct any exploration activities on an OCS lease or unit, MMS regulations require you to submit, and the MMS must approve, an EP that covers those activities. Before you conduct any development and production activities on an OCS lease or unit in the western Gulf of Mexico, MMS regulations require you to submit, and the MMS must approve, a DOCD that covers those activities. Before you conduct any development and production activities on a lease or unit in any OCS area in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, MMS regulations require you to submit, and the MMS must approve, a Development and Production Plan (DPP) that covers those activities. The MMS GOMR will provide guidelines for DPP's at a future date.

In addition to Initial EP's and DOCD's (which are defined as the first OCS plans to be submitted after the lease is awarded), the MMS GOMR has determined that there are three types of revisions to EP's and DOCD's:

*A Revised Plan*, a revision to an approved OCS plan, proposes *changes* such as those in the location of a well or platform, type of drilling unit, or location of the onshore support base.

*A Supplemental Plan*, a revision to an approved OCS plan, proposes the *addition* of an activity that requires a permit.

*An Amended Plan*, any revision to a pending OCS plan.

Each of these types of OCS plans needs contain only that information related to or affected by the proposed revision. However, make sure the description of the proposed revision is complete and includes the rationale for the proposed changes as they relate to the approved or pending OCS plan. It would also be helpful if you would reference in the revised OCS plan the approval date or MMS control number, if known, of the approved OCS plan you are revising.

In the MMS GOMR, revise your approved EP or DOCD when you

1. Change the type of drilling rig (e.g., jack-up, platform rig, barge, submersible, semisubmersible, or drillship), production facility (e.g., caisson, fixed platform with piles, tension-leg platform, etc.), or transportation mode (e.g., pipeline, barge) you will use to carry out the activities under your approved plan.
2. Change the surface location of a well (or associated anchor) by more than 100 feet in water depths less than 400 meters, or by more than 500 feet in water depths 400 meters or greater.
3. Increase the emissions of an air pollutant to an amount greater than that in your approved plan.
4. Request a new hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) area classification or encounter a concentration of H<sub>2</sub>S greater than 500 parts per million (ppm).
5. Propose to change the location of your onshore support base from one State to another.
6. Propose to conduct activities requiring an MMS permit (e.g., drilling a well or installing a facility) when more than 10 years have elapsed since the approval date of the most recent permit for an activity covered under the plan.
7. Change the approved anchor array pattern associated with your activities or increase the anchor radius by more than 500 feet if the MMS GOMR did not approve a specific anchor pattern.

Supplement your approved EP or DOCD when you propose to conduct activities on the lease(s) or unit that require permits and are not covered by your approved EP or DOCD.

## Copies of EP's and DOCD's

To expedite the review and coordination of your EP's and DOCD's, the MMS GOMR recommends that you submit the following number of copies for both EP's and DOCD's:

1. Initial and Supplemental OCS Plans that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS that affect the State of Florida (22 copies: 5 Proprietary and 17 Public Information).
2. Initial and Supplemental OCS Plans that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS that affect the State of Alabama (10 copies: 5 Proprietary and 5 Public Information).
3. Initial and Supplemental OCS Plans that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS that affect both the States of Mississippi and Louisiana (11 copies: 5 Proprietary and 6 Public Information).
4. Initial and Supplemental OCS Plans that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS that affect both the States of Mississippi and Louisiana and that are exempted from Coastal Zone Management (CZM) certification requirements (9 copies: 5 Proprietary and 4 Public Information).
5. Initial and Supplemental OCS Plans that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS that affect only the State of Louisiana (9 copies: 5 Proprietary and 4 Public Information).
6. Supplemental OCS Plans that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS that affect only the State of Louisiana and that are exempted from CZM certification requirements (8 copies: 5 Proprietary and 3 Public Information).
7. Initial and Supplemental OCS Plans that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS adjacent to the State of Texas (9 copies: 5 Proprietary and 4 Public Information).
8. Supplemental OCS Plans that describe activities on leases and unit areas on the OCS adjacent to the State of Texas and that are exempted from CZM certification requirements (8 copies: 5 Proprietary and 3 Public Information).

The MMS GOMR recommends that you submit 7 copies (5 Proprietary and 2 Public Information) for all revised and amended plans.

If you so choose, you may submit the copies above on separate CD-ROM's. (However, submit at least one Proprietary copy on paper.) In order to expedite our review, the MMS GOMR recommends that you submit at least one Proprietary and one Public Information copy as separate CD-ROM's. Please ensure that all files are in portable document format (PDF) or other acceptable format.

### **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.

### **Information Requirements for EP's and DOCD's**

The information requirements for OCS plans are specified in 30 CFR 250.203(a) and (b) for EP's and 30 CFR 250.204(a) and (b) for DOCD's. According to 30 CFR 250.203(b)(21) and 30 CFR 250.204(b)(17), the MMS GOMR may require data and information to be included in EP's and DOCD's in addition to that specified by the regulations. Conversely, 30 CFR 250.203(d) and 30 CFR 250.204(e) allow the MMS Regional Director to limit the amount of information to be included in EP's and DOCD's to that necessary to comply with the OCS Lands Act, as amended; other laws; applicable regulations; and lease provisions.

The President's National Energy Policy (May 2001) directs Federal agencies to streamline and expedite permitting processes. In line with this Policy, you no longer need to provide broad regional-scale environmental descriptive information that is readily available in the extensive information and analyses contained in the latest MMS EIS's (e.g., Sale 181 for the Eastern Planning Area), as well as the numerous historical and recently completed Environmental Studies. However, under MMS regulations, you must provide site-specific environmental information, such as water depth and seafloor morphology, as a matter of routine and identify any site-specific environmental impacts, such as onshore construction, that would result from conducting the activities proposed in the plan.

Under this authority, the MMS GOMR has developed Appendices A through J of this NTL as guidelines for preparing your EP's and DOCD's in the Gulf of Mexico. You should consider these Appendices as guidance documents. These appendices are:

<a href="#">Appendix A - Contents of Plan</a>	8
<a href="#">Appendix B - General Information</a>	10
<a href="#">Appendix C - Geological, Geophysical, and H<sub>2</sub>S Information</a>	12
<a href="#">Appendix D - Biological Information</a>	16
<a href="#">Appendix E - Wastes and Discharges Information</a>	18
<a href="#">Appendix F - Oil Spill Information</a>	20
<a href="#">Appendix G - Air Emissions Information</a>	26
<a href="#">Appendix H - Environmental Impact Analysis</a>	30
<a href="#">Appendix I - Coastal Zone Management Consistency Information</a>	31
<a href="#">Appendix J - OCS Plan Information Form</a>	35

In preparing your EP or DOCD, you may reference information and data discussed in other documents previously submitted or otherwise readily available to the MMS GOMR and other reviewers.

### **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 part 250, Subpart B. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the information collection requirements in these regulations and associated forms under OMB control number 1010-0049. In addition, the NTL refers to information collection requirements in 30 CFR 250, subpart C (1010-0057) and subpart D (1010-0053); 30 CFR 254 (1010-0091); and 30 CFR 256 (1010-0006). OMB has approved the information collection requirements in these regulations and assigned the OMB control numbers indicated in parenthesis for each. 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) 736-2419 if you have any questions regarding this NTL.

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