

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

NTL No. 2002-G09

Effective Date: October 1, 2002

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

**Regional and Subregional Oil Spill Response Plans**

This Notice to Lessees and Operators and Pipeline Right-of-way Holders (NTL) supersedes NTL No. 98-30, effective March 1, 1999, and NTL No. 98-30, Addendum No. 1, effective April 25, 2001. It provides for subregional Oil Spill Response Plans (OSRP's) in the Eastern Planning Area of the Gulf of Mexico, allows you to submit OSRP's in digital format on CD-ROM, adds guidance on calculating worst case scenario volumes, provides for a discussion of dispersant effectiveness over time, and makes a few minor technical amendments.

**Background**

On March 25, 1997, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) published its final rule (see Federal Register, Vol. 62, No. 57, pages 13991-14003, or 30 CFR Part 254) governing Oil Spill Response Plans (OSRP) and related requirements for facilities located seaward of the coast line, including those located in both State and Federal offshore waters. These new regulations became effective on June 23, 1997. In accordance with 30 CFR 254.3(d), the Regional Supervisor may specify how to address the elements of a regional OSRP. A regional OSRP is defined at 30 CFR 254.6 as a spill-response plan that "covers multiple facilities or leases of an owner or operator, including affiliates, which are located in the same MMS Region."

This NTL provides clarification, guidance, and information to operators of facilities and leases located seaward of the coastline regarding who is required to submit a regional OSRP and how to prepare and submit a regional OSRP in the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region (GOMR).

In accordance with 30 CFR 254.1(a), the MMS requires owners or operators of oil handling, storage, or transportation facilities that are located seaward of the coastline to submit spill response plans to the MMS for approval. To implement this requirement in an expedient manner, the GOMR encourages each Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lease operator to submit a regional OSRP that covers all of its existing OCS oil handling, storage, or transportation facilities and leases in the Gulf of Mexico. The definition of oil includes "oil, condensate that has been injected into a pipeline, or gas and naturally occurring condensate." We do not require owners or operators of OCS facilities, including pipelines, that handle, store, or transport only "dry" gas to submit a regional OSRP. However, before you determine that you are exempt under this provision, first check with the GOMR. When you do, provide the GOMR with sufficient information to support your conclusion that the facility handles, stores, or transports only "dry" gas by showing that, in the event of a leak, no liquid hydrocarbons would be released into the environment and no "sheen" would be visible on the ocean surface.

In addition, at 30 CFR 250.203(b)(2) and 30 CFR 250.204(b)(3), the MMS requires that each Exploration Plan (EP) and Development Operations Coordination Document (DOCD) include a site-specific OSRP or reference an approved regional OSRP. To implement this requirement in an expedient manner, the GOMR again encourages each OCS lease operator to submit and reference a regional OSRP that covers all of its existing OCS oil handling, storage, or transportation facilities and leases in the Gulf of Mexico.

However, the GOMR will not allow reference to a regional OSRP in an EP or a DOCD proposing activities in the Eastern Planning Area of the Gulf of Mexico. In this case, a lease operator can either (1) submit a site-specific OSRP, in accordance with the requirements at 30 CFR 254.21 through 30 CFR 254.29 with its EP or DOCD, or (2) with GOMR approval, reference an approved subregional OSRP in its EP or DOCD. A subregional OSRP covers leases and facilities in the Eastern Planning Area of the Gulf of Mexico that are in proximity to each other. If you select the option of preparing a subregional OSRP, contact the GOMR (Mr. Rusty Wright at (504) 736-2529) for a determination on the leases and facilities you may include (see 30 CFR 250.3(c)).

Additionally, the GOMR encourages each pipeline right-of-way (ROW) holder in the Gulf of Mexico that has one or more OCS ROW pipelines that transport oil (as defined by 30 CFR 254.6) to submit for approval a regional OSRP that covers its entire OCS ROW pipelines in the Gulf of Mexico. For those OCS ROW pipeline holders that are also OCS lease operators, a regional

OSRP can cover both OCS facilities and leases and OCS ROW pipelines.

For oil handling, storage, or transportation facilities and leases located in State waters seaward of the coastline, an owner or operator may choose one of three methods to comply with the OSRP requirement. As described in 30 CFR 254.51, one of these options is for an OCS lease operator or pipeline ROW holder to modify an existing OCS regional OSRP to include facilities in State offshore waters seaward of the coastline.

## **Procedures**

The Attachment to this NTL provides the guidelines for preparing regional and subregional OSRP's in the Gulf of Mexico. The guidelines are effective October 1, 2002.

Once the GOMR approves your regional or subregional OSRP, you must submit updates every two years in accordance with 30 CFR 254.30(a), or sooner if any of the conditions of 30 CFR 254.30(b) become applicable.

In accordance with 30 CFR 254.2(c), you must submit all new and revised regional and subregional OSRP's for approval to:

Minerals Management Service  
Regional Supervisor, Field Operations  
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region  
Attention: Plans Section (MS 5231)  
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130-2394

Submit one copy of each regional and subregional OSRP and any subsequent revisions. When you submit revisions to your regional or subregional OSRP, you must provide a clear set of instructions that indicates what pages to remove from the OSRP and where to place the new inserts.

In order to expedite the review of your regional or subregional OSRP, the GOMR encourages you to submit it on CD-ROM instead of paper. If you do, ensure that all files are in portable document format (PDF). Include a hotlinked index in the same order as the table of contents in this NTL. Ensure that the index identifies the location of each section of your OSRP.

## **Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 Statement**

The collection of information referred to in this NTL provides clarification, description, or interpretation of requirements in 30 CFR 254 and 30 CFR 250, Subpart B. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the information collection requirements in these regulations under OMB control numbers 1010-0091 and 1010-0049, respectively. This NTL does not impose additional information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act.

## **Contact**

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Rusty Wright, Field Operations, GOMR office, at (504) 736-2529.

Chris C. Oynes  
Regional Director

[Attachment](#)