

Safety Alert

BOEMRE

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management,
Regulation and Enforcement
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

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Blowout Preventer Automatic Mode (Deadman) Activation

Following the Deepwater Horizon incident in April 2010, BOEMRE promulgated the “Increased Safety Measures” rule with an effective date of October 14, 2010. This rule, in part, requires operators to submit (as part of the drilling permit process) schematic drawings of all blowout preventer equipment including all control systems and pods. This rule further requires operators to conduct a test of the automatic mode (deadman) activation system during the initial BOP test on the seafloor. During the Bureau’s review process of one of the drilling permits, it was determined through discussions with an operator that in the event of a deadman activation, the blind shear ram may open up immediately upon re-establishing power to the BOP stack.

In light of this discovery, BOEMRE recommends that operators and drilling contractors review their deadman activation procedures and control logic to ensure that the inadvertent opening of the blind shear does not occur when power is re-established to the BOP stack. One operator has presented a possible mitigation procedure that places the blind shear ram opening function in the “block” position prior to re-establishing power to the stack.

Further, BOEMRE will be reviewing all deadman testing procedures and control logic as part of the permit approval process to ensure that this recommendation has been taken into consideration and addressed. Failure to address this issue and recommendation may delay the permit approval. For further information, please direct all calls to the individual identified above.

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A **Safety Alert** is a tool used by BOEMRE to inform the offshore oil and gas industry of the circumstances surrounding an accident or a near miss. It also contains recommendations that should help prevent the recurrence of such an incident on the Outer Continental Shelf.