



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Office of Public Affairs

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT
Gary Strasburg, 202-208-3985
Nicolette Nye, 703-787-1011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 30, 2007

[Minerals Management Service Marks Hurricane Season 2007](#)

Improvements Emphasize Energy Security, Environmental Protection, and Personnel Safety

WASHINGTON — In preparation for Hurricane Season 2007, which begins June 1, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) today announced operational and administrative improvements that have been implemented to prepare oil and gas infrastructure in the Gulf of Mexico for the possibility of hurricanes this season. Key goals of the enhancements are to promote the nation's energy security, environmental protection and personnel safety.

Specifically, MMS has prepared and is in the process of formally implementing seven operational enhancements to further clarify special engineering practices and reporting procedures used by offshore operators on all structure types from Mobile Offshore Drilling Units and Jack-up rigs to existing and new fixed platforms. Thanks to the collaborative development of these new standards, the industry has already put much of the requirements into practice.

"Energy production from the Gulf is vital to our Nation's energy supply, but it's also imperative that MMS continue our strong emphasis on the measures we've implemented to ensure the safety of workers and environmental protection," said MMS Deputy Director Walter Cruickshank. "By working with all involved parties, including the Department of Energy, the U.S. Coast Guard, the American Petroleum Institute and the oil and gas industry, MMS has significantly improved the protection of oil and gas production in the Gulf from disruptions during this Hurricane Season."

Also in preparation for Hurricane Season 2007, MMS will activate its hurricane information Web site with broad overview hurricane-related information. The Web site will also offer updated evacuation and production statistics in the event of a hurricane or tropical storm as well as historical information on hurricanes and important links to other involved federal agencies.

The 2005 hurricane season saw a depth and breadth of destruction and disruption in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico unlike ever experienced before. Two major hurricanes, Katrina and Rita, sliced through the heart of the offshore oil and gas activity, hammering about 75 percent of the offshore facilities with hurricane force winds. In spite of this pounding there were no significant oil spills from wells, no evidence that oil from OCS facilities reached shore or impacted birds or mammals, and no significant personnel injuries. That success resulted from extensive planning

and preparation overseen by MMS and implemented by the oil and gas industry. The aim is to further improve that performance this year.

MMS oversees more than 7,300 oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf in the GOM. With more than 1,600 of these leases producing, current estimated daily production from the GOM is 1.3 million barrels of oil and 7.7 billion cubic feet of gas. These numbers are as of March 2007. This accounts for approximately 25 percent of the domestic oil production and 14 percent of the domestic natural gas production.

While always preparing for the possibility of hurricane and storm damage, MMS and the offshore industry witnessed unprecedented offshore damage resulting from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Both MMS and industry had to reassess what possible weather conditions could occur with a major hurricane moving through the GOM. The reassessment was done through American Petroleum Institute committees in which MMS was an active participant. The committees revised and updated the best practices and standards using the new information that had been collected following the 2005 hurricanes.