Gulf of Mexico Plans Workshop

Overview of Exploration and Development Plan Approval Process

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Plan Approval Process

Additional Presenter:

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**EPs, DPPs, or DOCDs**

- Exploration Plan (EP) - submitted prior to conducting exploration activities

- Development and Production Plan (DPP) - submitted prior to conducting development and production activities in any OCS area other than the Western Gulf of Mexico

- Development Operations Coordination Document (DOCD) – submitted prior to conducting development and production activities in the Western Gulf of Mexico
Activities Requiring EP, DPP, or DOCD

- Exploration activities
- Development and production activities
- Geological or geophysical (G&G) exploration or development activities that:
  - penetrate the seabed
  - use explosives
  - the Regional Director (RD) determines may have a significant adverse effect on the environment
  - the RD determines that a plan is necessary for certain ancillary activities (seismic surveys, scientific studies)
Determine if the proposed activities will:

- comply with applicable federal laws and regulations
- unreasonably interfere with other uses of the area or interfere with or endanger operations on other leases
- result in pollution
- create hazardous or unsafe conditions
- disturb any site, structure, or object of historical or archaeological significance
Determine if proposed activities will cause serious or undue harm or damage to:

- life
- property
- any other mineral deposits (in leased or unleased areas)
- the national security or defense
- the marine, coastal, or human environment
Permits Requiring Plan Approval

- BSEE Applications for Permit for Wells (APD, AST, APM)
- BSEE Platform applications
- BSEE Pipeline applications (lease term)
Volume of Plans Received

# EPs Received

- Initial EPs
- Revised EPs
- Supplemental EPs

FY 2011 - FY 2016

Initial EPs
Revised EPs
Supplemental EPs
Volume of Plans Received

![Graph showing the volume of plans received over fiscal years 2011 to 2016. The graph displays three lines representing Initial DOCDs (red), Supplemental DOCDs (blue), and Revised DOCDs (green). The data shows a peak in FY 2012 for Revised DOCDs, a decrease in FY 2013 and FY 2014, and a decrease in all categories by FY 2016.](image-url)
Plan Processing Time

Processing time includes Requests for Information (RFI) and Operator response time to RFIs.
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Plan Review and Decision Process

Company Submits Plan

Deemed Submitted Review

Compliance Review

Decision Options
Plan Review and Decision Process

* EP review process same for shallow water and deepwater and review timeframe set by regulations.
* Differences in amount of time spent completing reviews and evaluating information submitted determined by complexity of proposed activities, additional analyses needed for deepwater, and additional assessments for EA NEPA determinations.
Plan Review and Decision Process

- Operator Submits Plan
  - Plans Section verifies active lease(s); Plan Coordinator & Control # Assigned
  - INFO to Plan Coordinator
  - Operator receives RFI & submits additional, corrected information
- Within 25 working days, Plan Coordinator reviews, completes checklist & enters data in system
  - Plan Coordinator sends RFI
  - RFI

- Plan Coordinator notifies BOEM/BSEE reviewers

- BOEM/BSEE reviewers start review of plan & NEPA determination (EA/CE)
  - BOEM/BSEE reviews ongoing
  - BOEM/BSEE reviews Complete
  - Plan sent to external reviewers: CZMA, Governors, other Federal agencies (e.g., NMFS, FWS) & public website; plan also posted to regulations.gov if EA for public comment

* DOCD review process same for shallow water and deepwater and review timeframe set by regulations. If No Governors or local government consistency required the plan may be approved within 60 days after deemed submitted.

* Differences in amount of time spent completing reviews and evaluating information submitted determined by complexity of proposed activities, additional analyses needed for deepwater, and additional assessments for EA NEPA determinations.
Plan Review and Decision Process

1. Company Submits Plan
2. Deemed Submitted Review
3. Compliance Review
4. Decision Options
Plan Review and Decision Process

15 working days for an EP
25 working days for a DOCD or DPP
Plan Coordinator reviews information to determine completeness and accuracy
Plan Coordinator will inform operator of any deficiencies or problems that need to be addressed
Plan Coordinator also forwards plan to other groups within BOEM to begin their review of the information submitted
BOEM wants to ensure information is sufficiently adequate before the plan is posted for public comment and undergoes technical compliance reviews
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- Plan submitted to OE/Environmental Operations Section (EOS) for NEPA Determination Review.
- All operator plan and permit submittals receive some type of NEPA review.
- GIS-based system used as a tool to determine the level of NEPA review to be performed.
Authority


Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) implementing NEPA in 1978

Department Manual Categorical Exclusions (516 DM 15, Appendix 10)
The Level of NEPA Analysis is based upon Departmental and Agency Guidelines/Policy and Regional Triggers established for Potential Impact Producing Factors (IPFs).

- **Categorical Exclusion Review (CER)**
- **Environmental Assessment (EA)**
- **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**
Environmental Laws and Orders

- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Federal Water Pollution Control Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Clean Air Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Coastal Zone Management Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- E.O. 12898: Environmental Justice

*NEPA PROCESS*

NEPA coordinates compliance with other environmental requirements.
**BOEM Actions Normally Requiring an EA**

- G&G Permit applications
  - Deep stratigraphic tests
  - Solid or liquid explosives
  - Prospecting actions (airguns)
- Deepwater* Exploration Plans (EPs)
- Development and Production Plans (DPPs)
- Development Operations Coordination Documents (DOCDs) that include drilling in Deepwater*
- Applications for pipelines that go to shore or in the Eastern Planning Area of the GOM
- Pipeline transporting HC’s with >500 ppm of H_2S
- Structure Removals
- Activities proposing the use of New or Unusual Technology

*Deepwater = > 500’ water depth in the GOM and a subsea BOP or a surface BOP on a floating facility.*
Process for OCS Plans

After acquiring a lease the OCSLA obligates the operator to develop plans for it.
Plan Review and Decision Process

EPs must include:

- Details of the proposed activities
- Drilling locations
- Schedule of activities
- Description of equipment
- Environmental safeguards
- Oil spill information
- Onshore support facilities

Deemed Submitted Review
Plan Review and Decision Process

BOEM approves DPPs/DOCDs for the following additional activities:

- Platform and related equipment location(s)
- Development drilling and production
- Production transportation systems

DPPs/DOCDs must include a description of:

- Activities to be performed
- Facilities and operations
- Environmental safeguards
- Safety standards
- Schedule
- Oil spill information
- Onshore support facilities
Plan Review and Decision Process

Company Submits Plan

Deemed Submitted Review

Compliance Review

Decision Options
Plan Review and Decision Process

Within 2 working days after a plan has been deemed submitted, BOEM sends a public information copy of the plan to the following:

- The Governor and Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) agency of each affected State
- The BOEM website
- The website www.regulations.gov for 10 days when an Environmental Assessment is required
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- Other applicable federal agencies
Plan Review and Decision Process

- 30 calendar day review period for an EP
- 60 calendar day review period for a DOCD or DPP after:
  - The comment period closes for the Governor, local government, and general public
  - The final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a DPP is released or adopted
  - The last amendment to the proposed activities is received
- If an operator submits amendments after a plan is deemed submitted, the process restarts
Plan Review and Decision Process

Compliance Review

Review of the following information is completed:

- NEPA Review and Coordination
- Air and Water Quality
- Archaeological
- Benthic and Biological
- Marine Minerals
- Geological and Geophysical Data
- Worst Case Discharge Review and Verification
- Oil Spill Information
- Lease Designation(s) and Company Bonding
Plan Review and Decision Process

Review of the following information is completed:

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- Air and Water Quality
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- Lease Designation(s) and Company Bonding
Ensure operator is within air emission exemption limits.
Archaeological Reviews

Historical resources are identified to avoid contacts.
Avoidance in Conditions of Plan Approval is a key mitigation strategy.

Sensitive biological areas are protected from bottom disturbances.
Designated lease blocks with significant sand resources.
Plan Review and Decision Process

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Oil Spill Information Evaluation

Plans Section Performs the following:

- Analyzes oil spill information including the Blowout Scenario and the Oil Spill Response discussion
- Ensures calculated WCD volume is sufficiently covered by an approved and/or revised Oil Spill Response Plan (OSRP) for the activities proposed in the plan
- Coordinates with NMFS and Affected Coastal State Agencies
- Consults with BSEE Oil Spill Preparedness Division (OSPD)
- Discussion between BOEM and BSEE initiated when the Plan WCD Scenario > OSRP
Oil Spill Information Helpful Tips

- Oil Spill Information should include the most recently Approved OSRP and the date approved
- Oil Spill Information should also include the date of the most recently submitted update to the OSRP and status of submittal (i.e., In Compliance, No Further Action, Approve)
- The following Submittal Types should be used: Initial, OSRP Revision, OSRP Biennial Update, and Non-Regulatory Update
- Plans Section will validate that the last OSRP submittal does not affect the Worst Case Discharge Volume in relation to the Plans WCD Scenario
# Oil Spill Information Helpful Tips

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## WCD Scenarios

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<td>Production &lt; 10 miles</td>
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<td>Drilling &gt; 10 miles</td>
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</table>
Plan Review and Decision Process

**Compliance Review**

**External Agencies Consulted:**

- Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) Agencies
- Governor’s Office of Coastal States
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary
- Eglin Air Force Base
Plan Review and Decision Process

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For an EP, DPP, or DOCD the Regional Supervisor will:

- Approve the Plan
- Require the Company to Modify
- Disapprove the Plan
Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you!

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