

Exploration Plan/Development Operations Coordination Document Approval Process and Definitions

Daily updates for received/pending/deemed submitted/approved plans can be found at:

<http://www.boem.gov/Oil-and-Gas-Energy-Program/Plans/Status-of-Gulf-of-Mexico-Plans.aspx>.

More information on how BOEM is assisting offshore operators in submitting complete plans is also available.

Federal regulations (30 CFR 250.231) provide that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) will make a decision within 15 working days of the date that an Exploration Plan (EP) is received whether the EP may be deemed submitted. This decision is based on whether the operator submitting the EP has provided sufficient information for BOEM to begin its review. If sufficient information has not been provided, then the EP is not deemed submitted. Once BOEM has deemed the EP submitted, then, in accordance with 30 CFR 250.233 (see below), BOEM will take one of three actions within 30 days. These possible actions are (1) approve the EP, (2) disapprove the EP, or (3) require the operator to modify the EP. Also, in accordance with 30 CFR 250.233, if an amendment to a EP is received before BOEM has taken final action, then BOEM will take final action within 30 days of the date the amendment is received.

Similar requirements for Development Operations Coordination Documents (DOCD) may be found at 30 CFR 250.266 and 270, however, the timeframe to determine if a DOCD may be submitted is 25 working days, and the timeframe to take final action on a DOCD is approximately 120 days.

Due to the complexity of the information required to accompany an EP or DOCD, there are many reasons that an EP or DOCD may not be deemed submitted, may be amended after it is deemed submitted, or that modification of the EP or DOCD may be required. Some examples are: the information submitted is either inaccurate or incomplete; or the information submitted does not comply with the new safeguards that have been put in place to protect the environment beyond what has ever existed before. For more information, go to: <http://www.boem.gov/About-BOEM/Reforms/Reforms.aspx>.

PLAN DEFINITIONS

- An **Initial Exploration Plan** describes all exploration activities planned by an operator for a specific lease(s), the timing of these activities, information concerning drilling vessels, the location of each well, and an analysis of both offshore and onshore impacts that may occur as a result of the plan's implementation.
- A **Revised Exploration Plan** describes changes to proposed activities already included in a previously approved Exploration Plan.
- A **Supplemental Exploration Plan** includes a description of proposed activities on a lease(s) that were not included an original Exploration Plan for that lease(s).
- A **Development Operations Coordination Document** is a plan that describes development and production activities proposed by an operator for a lease or group of leases. The description includes the timing of these activities, information concerning drilling vessels, the location of each proposed well or production platform or other structure, and an analysis of both offshore and onshore impacts that may occur as a result of the plan's implementation.
- A **Supplemental DOCD** describes proposed activities on a lease(s) that were not included in a previously approved DOCD and will require approval of additional permit(s).
- A **Revised DOCD** describes changes to the proposed activities included in a previously approved DOCD, but will not require the approval of additional permit(s).