



## 2007 Hurricane Season Preparations: Protecting the Gulf of Mexico Energy Production

In preparation for the 2007 hurricane season, the Minerals Management Service (MMS), the U.S. Coast Guard, the Department of Energy, and the energy industry have been working to ensure protection of the Gulf of Mexico's energy production.

Specifically, MMS has prepared, and is in the process of implementing seven operational enhancements to further clarify special engineering practices and reporting procedures used by offshore operators, which involve all structure types from Mobile Offshore Drilling Units and Jack-up rigs to existing and new fixed platforms.

Specific upgrades and enhancements include:

- the installation of GPS locators and black box information storage systems on Mobile Offshore Drilling Units, which will continue to monitor on-site conditions after evacuation of personnel as well as track the location of the unit should it drift from its position;
- guidance for assessing existing structures for vulnerabilities and applying modifications to minimize damage;
- site-assessment guidance that is targeted at identifying the best seafloor and soil conditions for jack-up rigs and determining where and when a particular jack-up rig can be used during the hurricane season;
- a requirement that drilling contractors upgrade their mooring systems for mobile drilling units by increasing in the number of mooring lines from eight to 12 and in some cases from eight to 16;
- additional requirements for the type and strength of anchors and mooring lines used by mobile drilling units;

- a requirement that a detailed checklist be used to assess the safety of a mooring system;
- guidance was issued concerning the improvement of tie-down procedures for securing equipment on offshore facilities;

Additionally, a representative of the U.S. Coast Guard has been added as a regular active member of the MMS Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Team and will deploy with the team in the initial activation phase; and a secondary Continuity of Operations Plan site has been prepared in Lafayette, LA in addition to the main contingency site in Houston, TX.



The process of assessing damage and testing and developing potential technological advancements will never be complete because it is a continuous process. MMS and its partner organizations are dedicated to making certain that offshore energy methods and procedures are safer today than yesterday, and that they continue to improve. For more information on MMS and hurricane preparations, contact the MMS Office of Public Affairs at (202) 208-3985 or visit [www.mms.gov](http://www.mms.gov).