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Offshore Oil Spills: PREPARATION is Paramount

Minimizing the possibility of an oil spill throughout the offshore energy exploration and extraction process is one of the Minerals Management Services's (MMS) top priorities. In the aftermath of the 2005 hurricane season, a number of modifications to already stringent preparedness procedures were issued.

The new requirements address detailed aspects of offshore energy equipment, procedures, and reporting requirements. Highlights of the new requirements are:

- **Pipelines:** Additional inspection of pipelines, risers, pipeline crossings, and pipeline leak tests are required of all equipment that was in the path of the 2005 hurricanes.
- **Data:** More detailed site-specific data on potential installation hazards must be provided.
- **Risk:** A Risk Assessment Checklist, summarizing risk exposure and emphasizing potential oil spill risk exposure, must be developed and followed.
- **Anchors:** Additional information on types of anchors used to moor equipment, with details of the subsea infrastructure within a 10-mile radius of equipment, must be obtained.
- **Mooring:** Contractors must provide a mooring inspection document.
- **Additional Mitigation:** Any additional information that could mitigate risks or for the 2007 hurricane season is also required.

MMS manages offshore oil and gas exploration as well as renewable energy sources including wind wave, solar, and underwater current on 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf while protecting the human, marine, and costal environments. MMS also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian lands.

For more information on MMS and new and improving offshore safety procedures and requirements in the OCS, contact the MMS Office of Public Affairs at 202-208-3985 or visit www.mms.gov.

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