

# Safety Alert

**MMS**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Minerals Management Service  
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

Safety Alert No. 286  
15 December 2009

Contact: Glynn T. Breaux  
(504) 736-2560

## **FIRE INSIDE AC EVAPORATOR ENCLOSURE**

Recently operations personnel discovered a temperature increase inside the climate-controlled Motor Control Center (MCC) building. Upon further investigation, evidence indicated that a fire had occurred inside one of the air conditioner (AC) evaporator enclosures located on top of the MCC building. The MCC building is not located in a Classified Area.

A Minerals Management Service (MMS) investigation into this incident revealed the following findings:

- The ¼-inch drain line from the bottom of the fuel gas meter's 5-way valve manifold was tied-in directly into the AC evaporator enclosure's drain line which terminates at the main drain line for the fuel gas skid.
- The fuel gas meter's 5-way valve manifold was drained regularly to prevent fluid build-up in the fuel gas meter.
- Operations personnel indicated that, on occasion, they would experience a gas/condensate odor in the MCC building but the source of the odor was never investigated.
- Gas migrated through the AC evaporator enclosure's drain line and accumulated inside the AC evaporator enclosure prior to ignition.
- Due to the severity of the damage caused by the fire, the source of ignition could not be determined.

Therefore, the MMS recommends the following:

- Process drain lines (pressure or atmospheric) should not be combined with domestic drain lines.
- Tubing and/or piping should be traced prior to being tied-in, and the hazards of drain line placement should be evaluated prior to installation.
- All sources of gas/condensate odors should be investigated if the odor is not considered a normal part of the particular operation or area.
- The facility should be visually inspected on a regular basis for any indication of an abnormal condition; e.g., odors, leaks, etc.

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