



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

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**Trawl Net Snags Pipeline, Resulting in Oil Spill**

A flange bolt or bolts on a 4½-inch offshore pipeline in approximately 200 feet of water off the Louisiana coast were snagged by a trawl net, resulting in a pipeline break and a spill of approximately 4,533 barrels of oil. The flange was in very close proximity to a subsea tie-in assembly that had been covered with sandbags after its removal, repair, and reinstallation resulting from a previous accident. The sandbags, however, did not cover the subject flange at the conclusion of the reinstallation. As a result, the flange was exposed to the trawl, thereby resulting in the above-referenced accident.

Therefore, from this information, it is recommended that flanges be considered among those items listed in 30 CFR 250.1003(a)(2) as constituting possible obstructions and consequently requiring prescribed protective covering.

For details of the accident, see OCS Report MMS 97-0031. Copies of the report may be obtained from the MMS Public Information Office located at 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123 (1-800-200-GULF or local 504-736-2519).

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MMS Internet Homepage: <http://www.gomr.mms.gov>