



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

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Notice No. 019

February 13, 1975

OCS Operations Safety Alert

Safety System Failure--Oil Spill

An oil spill occurred recently on an offshore production platform when a safety system malfunction resulted in failure to shut in a well.

Two wells were producing into surge tanks which were being pumped into the pipeline. The gas supply to the pump "froze up," the pump shut down, and the surge tanks filled up. The high liquid level control shut in only one of the producing wells. The oil in the tanks ran over onto the platform deck and into the sump tank. The sump tank filled and the high liquid level control also failed to shut in the producing well, resulting in approximately 25 barrels of oil being spilled overboard.

The malfunction in the safety system was found to be a friction-locked "O" ring in the block and bleed valve on the well which failed to shut in.

To prevent a recurrence of this type of accident, the operator has instructed the switcher not to leave the wells on the facility producing unless there is sufficient storage tank space to permit flowing the wells until he returns the following day.

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