



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

Notice No. 080

November 17, 1978

**OCS Operations Safety Alert**  
**Gas Fire -- Extensive Platform Damage**

Wind blew a tarpaulin, which was being used as a temporary shelter, against the muffler of a diesel engine. The tarpaulin ignited and started a fire which required the aid of two field boats to extinguish.

The tarpaulin shelter had been installed several weeks before the fire occurred. The ignition source was the uninsulated muffler of the diesel engine. Heat from the burning tarpaulin melted the teflon seats in high pressure needle valves located on the gas lift header, and leaking gas rapidly spread the fire.

Fortunately, the wind blew the fire outboard, away from the wellheads. The Emergency Shutdown System shut in the platform, and, the control valves on all pipelines had closed; however, gas was still feeding the fire. It was thought that the check valve in the outgoing pipeline was leaking, so all connections to the pipelines were closed. This terminated the gas source and the fire was brought under control.

To prevent a recurrence of this type accident, the operator has taken the following action:

1. The muffler on this engine was insulated, and the exhaust system on all other engine installations was checked for proper insulation.
2. The gas lift header was relocated, and an automatic shut-off valve was installed upstream of the header. This valve can be closed by either the Emergency Shutdown System or the Fire Loop System.
3. All soft-seated needle valves were replaced with valves having metal-to-metal seats for greater fire resistance.
4. All temporary shelters were replaced with suitable permanent shelters.
5. The pipeline operator was asked to inspect check valves and to maintain as necessary to insure proper operation.

[signed] D.W. Solanas

Oil and Gas Supervisor

Operations Support

Gulf of Mexico Area