



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

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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For Release: April 27, 2000

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### **MMS Issues Revised Guidelines on Preparing Exploration and Development Plans**

The Gulf of Mexico OCS Region of the Minerals Management Service issued revised guidelines today on how to prepare offshore oil and gas exploration and development plans.

The Minerals Management Service, an agency in the Department of the Interior, oversees oil and gas operations in offshore Federal waters. The law governing these operations requires that a company submit and receive MMS approval of either an exploration plan or a development plan before it can conduct drilling or production operations.

The MMS has issued regulations to implement the law regarding exploration and development plans. The guidance issued today further clarifies and enhances these requirements for operations in the Gulf of Mexico.

Previously, this guidance was contained in 12 different documents issued over the past several years. The new guidance, in the form of a document called a Notice to Lessees and Operators, updates the guidance and consolidates it into one document. It will provide much greater clarity of exactly what an operator must submit to MMS and thus streamlines the entire process, saving countless hours in clarifying questions. The Gulf Region of MMS receives between 600 and 700 plans per year.

The Minerals Management Service is issuing this Notice to Lessees and Operators on an interim basis. In the near future, the Minerals Management Service is planning to rewrite its regulations regarding exploration and development plans. When that happens, the Notice to Lessees and Operators will be rewritten to bring it into accord with the new regulations.

Copies of the Notice to Lessees and Operators issued today are available by visiting the Public Information Office of the MMS at 1201 Elmwood Park Blvd in New Orleans or by accessing the Minerals Management Service web site at [mms.gov](http://mms.gov). Refer to NTL No. 2000-G10.

The MMS is the Federal agency that manages the Nation's oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources on the OCS; and collects, accounts for, and disburses about \$4 billion in yearly revenues from offshore Federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and American Indian lands.

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MMS's Website Address: <http://www.mms.gov>