

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE (MMS)
GULF OF MEXICO OCS REGION (GOMR)**

NTL No. 200x-G__

Effective Date:

**NOTICE TO LESSEES AND OPERATORS OF FEDERAL OIL, GAS, AND SULPHUR
LEASES AND PIPELINE RIGHT-OF-WAY HOLDERS (NTL) IN THE OUTER
CONTINENTAL SHELF, GULF OF MEXICO (GOM) OCS REGION**

Marine Trash and Debris Awareness and Elimination

This NTL is being issued pursuant to 30 CFR 250.103 to update the marine trash and debris awareness recordkeeping and certification requirements. The annual report required by this NTL must include the number of employees and/or contractors trained and be submitted to the MMS at the address shown below. This NTL supersedes and replaces NTL No. 2003-G11, effective June 19, 2003, on this subject and applies to all existing and future oil and gas operations in the Gulf of Mexico OCS.

Background

Marine trash and debris pose a threat to fish, marine mammals, sea turtles, and other marine animals; cause costly delays and repairs for commercial and recreational boating interests; detract from the aesthetic quality of recreational shore fronts; and increase the cost of beach and park maintenance. As oil and gas industry activities expand into deeper waters, the number of species of protected marine animals exposed to marine debris is increasing and now includes the sperm whale, an endangered species, as well as other marine mammals, and five species of sea turtles.

Since oil and gas operations in the GOM contribute to this chronic problem, §§ 250.300(a) and (b)(6) prohibit you from deliberately discharging containers and other similar materials (i.e., trash and debris) into the marine environment, and § 250.300(c) requires you to make durable identification markings on equipment, tools and containers (especially drums), and other material.

Furthermore, the intentional jettisoning of trash has been the subject of strict laws such as MARPOL-Annex V and the Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act, and regulations imposed by various agencies including the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

These USCG and EPA regulations further require that you become more proactive in avoiding accidental loss of solid waste items by developing waste management plans, posting informational placards, manifesting trash sent to shore, and using special precautions such as covering outside trash bins to prevent accidental loss of solid waste.

Therefore, you should exercise special caution when you handle and dispose of small items and packaging materials, particularly those made of non-biodegradable, environmentally persistent materials such as plastic or glass that can be lost in the marine environment and washed ashore. Increasing your individual workers' awareness of the problem and emphasizing their responsibilities will help reduce the litter problem further and control the unintended loss of items such as empty buckets, hard hats, shrink wrap, strip lumber and pipe thread protectors.

Your adherence to these requirements has reduced, if not eliminated, trash intentionally jettisoned into the GOM. However, the MMS is still concerned about the accidental loss of articles from structures and vessels. In some cases, this results from poor waste management practices (e.g., no lids or unsecured lids on waste receptacles), but in others it is caused by the failure of individuals to secure materials and personal belongings aboard vessels and facilities. To reduce further the accidental introduction of marine trash and debris into the GOM, you must immediately implement the following programs.

Marine Trash and Debris Placards

You must post placards that include each of the information text boxes in Appendix 1 of this NTL in prominent places on all fixed and floating production facilities that have sleeping or food preparation capabilities and on mobile drilling units engaged in oil and gas operations in the GOM OCS. All of the placards depicted, with the language specified, should be displayed on an approximately 5x8 inch format. These signs should be displayed at line-of-sight height at or near boat landings and heliports, in mess areas, and in the recreation or training or orientation area. One or more areas may be omitted if there is insufficient space. These notices should be referenced, and their contents explained, during any initial orientation given on the facility for visitors or occupants. Placards must be sturdy enough to withstand the local environment and must be replaced when damage or wear compromises readability.

Marine Trash and Debris Awareness Training

All of your offshore employees and those contractors actively engaged in your offshore operations (e.g., wireline operators, contract lease operators and maintenance or construction crews) must have completed marine trash and debris awareness training described below at least once. Thereafter, all such personnel must complete this training annually.

The training for employees and contractors consists of two parts: (1) viewing a training video or slide show, and (2) receiving an explanation from the lessee company's management that emphasizes their commitment to the message of this NTL.

You may obtain the marine debris training video or access the slide show by contacting the OOC website at www.offshoreoperators.com.

You may fulfill the first part of this training requirement by utilizing the slide show developed by the OOC and available on the website above.

Marine Trash and Debris Awareness Training and Certification Process

You should develop and be using a marine trash and debris awareness training and certification process that reasonably assures that the employees and contractors specified above are in fact trained. Your training process should include the following elements:

- 1) viewing of either the video or the slide show by the personnel specified above using one of the following methods:
 - a) attendance at periodic meetings held for this purpose;
 - b) as part of several scheduled training components;
 - c) web-based training with email notification; or
 - d) training by a third-party contractor;
- 2) an explanation from the management that conveys the commitment of the company to achieve the objectives of the trash and debris containment requirement;
- 3) attendance measures (initial and annual); and
- 4) recordkeeping and availability of records for inspection by MMS.

By January 31st of each year, you should provide MMS with an annual report (1–2 pages) signed by a company official that describes your marine trash and debris awareness training process (including the number of employees and/or contractors trained) and certifies that the training process has been followed for the previous calendar year. A sample annual report is available at the OOC website above. Annual reports should be sent to the Minerals Management Service, Attention: Chief, Environmental Sciences Section (MS 5432), 1201 Elmwood Park Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70123 or electronically to marinedebris@mms.gov.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) Statement

The PRA (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) requires us to inform you that we collect the information described in this NTL to ensure that you conduct operations in a manner that will not jeopardize threatened or endangered species or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat that has been designated for those species. We protect all proprietary information submitted according to the Freedom of Information Act and 30 CFR 250.196. An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control Number. We estimate the hour burden to be one-half hour per training record. We estimate the hour burden to be one-half hour for each annual report and certification. The placard postings are exempt from the PRA requirements. Direct comments regarding the burden or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, Mail Stop 4230, Minerals Management Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240.

In addition, this NTL refers to information collection requirements under 30 CFR 250, subparts B and C. The OMB has approved all of the information collection requirements in these regulations and assigned OMB Control Numbers 1010-0151 and 1010-0057, respectively.

Contact

Any questions regarding this NTL should be submitted in writing to: marinedebris@mms.gov.

Chris C. Oynes
Regional Director

Appendix 1

Marine Debris Placards

WHAT IS MARINE DEBRIS?

Marine debris is any object or fragment of wood, metal, glass, rubber, plastic, cloth, paper or any other man-made item or material that is lost or discarded in the marine environment. Marine debris may be intentionally dumped, accidentally dropped, or indirectly deposited. Whatever the source, marine debris is a direct result of human activities on land and at sea. Depending upon its composition, marine debris may sink to the seafloor, drift in the water column, or float on the surface of the sea. Certain debris, such as plastics, can persist for hundreds of years in the marine environment without decomposing.

WARNING!

YOUR ACTIONS MAY SUBJECT YOU TO SEVERE LEGAL CONSEQUENCES!

The disposal and/or discharge of any solid waste anywhere in the marine environment (other than ground-up food particles) is strictly prohibited by USCG and EPA regulations. **THIS INCLUDES MATERIALS OR DEBRIS ACCIDENTALLY LOST OVERBOARD.**

The disposal of equipment, cables, chains, containers or other materials into offshore waters is prohibited by MMS (§ 250.300(b)(6)). **THIS INCLUDES MATERIALS OR DEBRIS ACCIDENTALLY LOST OVERBOARD.**

ATTENTION!

MARINE DEBRIS MAY CAUSE SEVERE ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE!

Marine debris discarded or lost from offshore and coastal sources may injure or kill fish, marine mammals, sea turtles, seabirds and other wildlife.

Thousands of marine animals, including marine mammals, sea turtles, and seabirds die every year from entanglement in fishing line, strapping bands, discarded ropes and nets, and plastic six-pack rings. Additionally, unknown numbers of marine animals die each year from internal injury, intestinal blockage, and starvation as a result of ingesting marine debris.

Marine debris fouls boat propellers and clogs water intake ports on engines thereby endangering the safety of fishermen and boaters resulting in heavy loss of time and money.

Marine debris detracts from the aesthetic quality of recreational beaches and shorelines and increases the cost of park and beach maintenance.

ATTENTION!

SECURE ALL LOOSE ARTICLES!

NOAA Fisheries now expects petroleum industry personnel to pick up and recover any articles lost overboard from boats and offshore structures as safety conditions permit.

Protect marine animals, as well as your valuable time and money, by doing the following to prevent accidental loss of these items:

Properly securing all materials, equipment, and personal belongings. Articles such as hardhats, life vests, sunglasses, cigarette lighters, parts bags, buckets, shrink wrap, strip lumber, and pipe thread protectors become marine debris when lost overboard.

Making sure that all trash receptacles have tight fitting lids and that the lids are used.

Providing and using secure cigarette butt containers. Cigarette butts are one of the most common forms of marine debris. Many cigarette butts contain some form of plastic and do not decompose in the ocean. Cigarette butts pose a major threat to marine wildlife as they resemble food and cause gut blockages and starvation when ingested.

Doing your part to eliminate marine debris. Encourage others to be responsible about marine debris by making suggestions to secure potential marine debris on your boat or structure or by participating in a beach cleanup.