

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT**

NTL No.2021-N02

Effective Date: 06/24/2021

**NATIONAL NOTICE TO LESSEES AND OPERATORS OF**  
**FEDERAL OIL AND GAS LEASES OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF**

**Helideck Closures and Markings**

**Purpose**

This Notice to Lessees and Operators (NTL) offers guidance on the recommended safety practice of visual signaling, helideck and facility identification markings, and notification of a helideck closure. This NTL replaces and supersedes NTL No. 2011-N080 Temporary Helideck Closures.

**Authority**

As required by 30 CFR 250.107(b), “you must immediately control, remove, or otherwise correct any hazardous oil and gas accumulation or other health, safety or fire hazard.”

When the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) “conducts an inspection, you must provide: (1) Access to all platforms ... and (2) Helicopter landing sites and refueling facilities for any helicopters we use to regulate offshore operations,” 30 CFR 250.132(a).

When helicopter landing facilities are present on OCS facilities “you must display an additional identification sign that is visible from the air. The sign must use at least 12-inch letters and figures and must also display the weight capacity of the helipad unless noted on the top of the helipad. If this sign is visible to both helicopter and boat traffic, then the sign in paragraph (a)(1) of this section is not required,” 30 CFR 250.154(a)(2).

Also, record keeping duties of operators require that “you must submit to the appropriate District Manager a contact list for all OCS facilities at least annually or when contact information is revised,” 30 CFR 250.890(c).

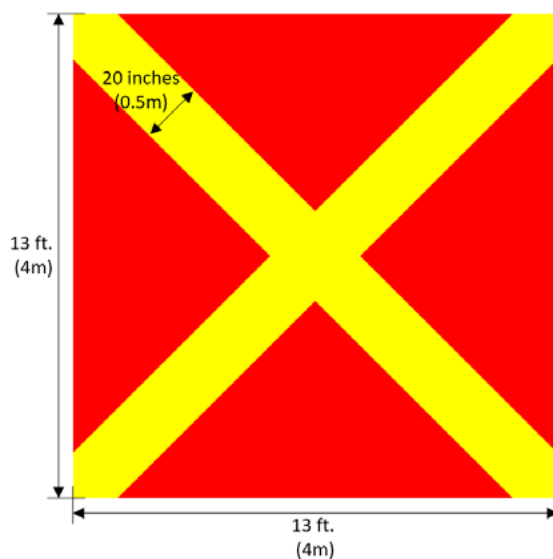
**Background**

Under certain conditions, a facility may prohibit the use of its helideck. There have been historical and recent incidents involving helicopters landing on temporarily or permanently closed (or out-of-service) helidecks on OCS platforms. Additionally, there have been incidents of misidentification of helidecks resulting in helicopter landings at the wrong facilities in part due to improperly marked or maintained helidecks.

In the interest of safety, many Offshore Operators adhere to the updated Helicopter Safety Advisory Conference (HSAC) Recommended Practice (RP) No. 163, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (January 2020), *Section 8.8*

*Closing Helidecks:* “A yellow “X” marked over a red background diagonally from corner to corner across a helideck or heliport touchdown area is the universally accepted visual indicator that the landing area is closed and that helicopter operations are not permitted. Consistent with RP 163, BSEE recommends the following practice.

8.8.1 Temporary Closing: A temporary prohibited landing marker can be used for hazards of an interim nature. This marker could be made from vinyl or other durable material in the shape of a diagonal "X". The marker shall be red background 13 feet (4m) square with the legs of the “X” 20 inches (0.5m) in width. This marker is designed to be quickly secured and removed from the deck using grommets and rope ties. The duration, time, location, and nature of these temporary closings shall be provided to and coordinated with nearby helicopter bases, and helicopter operators supporting the area. These markers MUST be removed when the hazard no longer exists. Example marking:



**Figure 9: Illustration of Panel Used to Temporarily Close a Helideck**

Notify company aviation departments, helicopter operators or bases, and manned facilities of the pending temporary closure so the Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) system can be activated for the operation and the temporary helideck closure. Helideck Status lights shall remain “ON” for manned facilities (see 7.5.1.5).

8.8.2 Permanent Closing: If a helideck is to be permanently closed, the marking as prescribed in 8.8 shall be used and shall be painted on the landing area. A NOTAM shall be issued when the helideck is closed and the [Helideck Information Plate] (HIP) revoked.”

The referenced HSAC RP may be viewed at <http://www.hsac.org>.

## **Guidance**

Closed helidecks at an operator’s facility can affect the safety of helideck access or aviation fueling operations. Accordingly, BSEE highly recommends that a Notice to Airman (NOTAM) be promptly published. The duration, time, location, and nature of the temporary or permanent closure should be

discussed as necessary with the aviation company supporting the installation. Subsequent NOTAMs will ensure helideck closure notifications are widely distributed to all pilots flying in the area. Additionally, BSEE recommends that operators adhere to HSAC RP 163 at Sec. 8.8 to include clearly visible markings related to their facilities for temporarily and permanently closed helidecks. *Required helideck and facility identification markings should always be maintained and made clearly visible.* Finally, facilities should be operated in accordance with the regulatory standards as referenced above in 30 CFR 250.

### **Document Statement**

BSEE issues NTLs as guidance documents in accordance with 30 CFR 250.103 to clarify, supplement, and provide more detail about certain BSEE regulatory requirements and outline the information you provide in your various submittals. Under that authority, this NTL sets forth a policy on, and an interpretation of, a regulatory requirement that provides a clear and consistent approach to complying with that requirement. However, if you wish to use an alternate approach for compliance, you may do so after you receive approval from the appropriate BSEE office under 30 CFR 250.141.

### **Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 Statement**

This NTL provides clarification, description, or guidance of requirements for collection of information contained in 30 CFR part 250, Subpart K. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the collection of information required by this regulation and assigned OMB Control Number 1014-0019. This NTL does not impose additional information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

### **Contacts**

If you have any questions about helideck closures and markings, please contact one of the following BSEE Regional Aviation Managers.

Gulf of Mexico  
Region: Pacific  
Region: Alaska

Eric Brewton at (504)736-7598  
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