

Safety Alert

MMS

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

Safety Alert No. 247
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Fatality on Storm-Damaged Platform

A contract employee boarded a storm-damaged platform for unknown reasons. The platform was unmanned, not producing any hydrocarbons, and had no preventative measures in place to alert anyone boarding the platform of present dangers, which included holes in the deck caused by missing grating. The contract employee was on the platform approximately 10 minutes when he fell 20+ feet, striking his head on the plus 10-deck and subsequently falling into the water. The contract employee was flown to Our Lady of the Sea Hospital in Galliano, Louisiana, where he was pronounced deceased early that afternoon.

MMS concluded the contract employee deviated from the original plan, which did not include boarding the damaged platform. MMS further concluded that the accident in part was caused by the operator's failure to barricade hazards, post warning signs, and timely issue a list of closed facilities.

MMS recommends the following:

- Lessees and Operators should review their policies regarding access and boarding damaged platforms.
- Lessees and Operators should communicate clearly and in writing what is expected of their field representatives with respect to boarding damaged, unrepaired structures or platforms in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Before personnel board a closed structure or platform, a hazard mitigation plan must be prepared to address all issues concerning damage.
- Signs should be posted on platform access points advising that the platform is "closed."
- Metal bars should be installed across all stairwell entry points.
- Helicopter landing decks should have a red "X" painted on the deck if it is unsafe to land, and if it is safe to land, the stairways leading down should be barricaded.