

Safety Alert

MMS

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Post-Hurricane Construction Fatality and Other Incidents

Recently there have been several incidents, including a fatality, injuries, falls, and fires, involving construction work related to post-Hurricane Katrina and post-Hurricane Rita repair efforts. Because of (1) the increased amount of construction work currently ongoing in these repair efforts, (2) the possibility of a widely varied range of offshore experience on the part of the contracted workers, and (3) the potentially unfamiliar hazardous offshore environment in which they are and will be working, it is therefore recommended that special attention be directed by operators to this accelerated construction activity.

Some specific recommendations to operators are as follows:

Operators should increase their awareness of their contractor's general safety plan and monitor all aspects of the contractor's performance for compliance with that plan and that of the operator's.

Operators should familiarize contractors with their facility's emergency procedures including, but not limited to, alarm recognition, location, and activation; fire fighting and lifesaving equipment location and use; and facility evacuation procedures, including muster locations.

Because of the already existing hazardous conditions for which the construction work is required and because of the nature of the construction work itself, operators should require and monitor the contractor's (1) use of personnel protective equipment, e.g., fall arrest and personal flotation equipment; (2) adherence to hot work permits; (3) use of barricades to isolate work areas and fall hazards; and (4) use of job safety analyses (JSA).

Because of the potential unfamiliarity of the construction workers with offshore production, drilling, and workover operations that might be performed simultaneously with construction work, operators should alert construction crews through their supervisors as to the specific oil and gas operation with which the construction work might unintentionally interact and the possible dire consequences of such interaction. Operator, construction contractor, and/or joint JSA's should address such possible interactions.

In order to ensure that all of the above is properly addressed, operators should establish clear lines of communication between operator and construction crew supervision and maintain that communication throughout the life of the construction project, with special attention being given to the possibility of miscommunication caused by crew and shift changes.