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### Title 30: Mineral Resources

#### [PART 250—OIL AND GAS AND SULPHUR OPERATIONS IN THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF](#)

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#### Subpart Q—Decommissioning Activities

**Authority:** 43 U.S.C. 1331 *et seq.*

**Source:** 67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002, unless otherwise noted.

#### General

#### § 250.1700 What do the terms “decommissioning”, “obstructions”, and “facility” mean?

(a) *Decommissioning* means:

- (1) Ending oil, gas, or sulphur operations; and
- (2) Returning the lease or pipeline right-of-way to a condition that meets the requirements of regulations of MMS and other agencies that have jurisdiction over decommissioning activities.

(b) *Obstructions* means structures, equipment, or objects that were used in oil, gas, or sulphur operations or marine growth that, if left in place, would hinder other users of the OCS. Obstructions may include, but are not limited to, shell mounds, wellheads, casing stubs, mud line suspensions, well protection devices, subsea trees, jumper assemblies, umbilicals, manifolds, termination skids, production and pipeline risers, platforms, templates, pilings, pipelines, pipeline valves, and power cables.

(c) *Facility* means any installation other than a pipeline used for oil, gas, or sulphur activities that is permanently or temporarily attached to the seabed on the OCS. Facilities include production and pipeline risers, templates, pilings, and any other facility or equipment that constitutes an obstruction such as jumper assemblies, termination skids, umbilicals, anchors, and mooring lines.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66047, Oct. 30, 2002]

#### § 250.1701 Who must meet the decommissioning obligations in this subpart?

(a) Lessees and owners of operating rights are jointly and severally responsible for meeting decommissioning obligations for facilities on leases, including the obligations related to lease-term pipelines, as the obligations accrue and until each obligation is met.

(b) All holders of a right-of-way are jointly and severally liable for meeting decommissioning obligations for facilities on their right-of-way, including right-of-way pipelines, as the obligations accrue and until each obligation is met.

(c) In this subpart, the terms “you” or “I” refer to lessees and owners of operating rights, as to facilities installed under the authority of a lease, and to right-of-way holders as to facilities installed under the authority

of a right-of-way.

**§ 250.1702 When do I accrue decommissioning obligations?**

You accrue decommissioning obligations when you do any of the following:

- (a) Drill a well;
- (b) Install a platform, pipeline, or other facility;
- (c) Create an obstruction to other users of the OCS;
- (d) Are or become a lessee or the owner of operating rights of a lease on which there is a well that has not been permanently plugged according to this subpart, a platform, a lease term pipeline, or other facility, or an obstruction;
- (e) Are or become the holder of a pipeline right-of-way on which there is a pipeline, platform, or other facility, or an obstruction; or
- (f) Re-enter a well that was previously plugged according to this subpart.

**§ 250.1703 What are the general requirements for decommissioning?**

When your facilities are no longer useful for operations, you must:

- (a) Get approval from the appropriate District Manager before decommissioning wells and from the Regional Supervisor before decommissioning platforms and pipelines or other facilities;
- (b) Permanently plug all wells;
- (c) Remove all platforms and other facilities, except as provided in sections 1725(a) and 1730.
- (d) Decommission all pipelines;
- (e) Clear the seafloor of all obstructions created by your lease and pipeline right-of-way operations; and
- (f) Conduct all decommissioning activities in a manner that is safe, does not unreasonably interfere with other uses of the OCS, and does not cause undue or serious harm or damage to the human, marine, or coastal environment.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002, as amended at 74 FR 19807, Apr. 29, 2009]

**§ 250.1704 When must I submit decommissioning applications and reports?**

You must submit decommissioning applications and receive approval and submit subsequent reports according to the table in this section.

**Decommissioning Applications and Reports Table**

Decommissioning	When to submit	Instructions
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<b>applications and reports</b>		
(a) Initial platform removal application [not required in the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region]	In the Pacific OCS Region or Alaska OCS Region, submit the application to the Regional Supervisor at least 2 years before production is projected to cease	Include information required under §250.1726.
(b) Final removal application for a platform or other facility	Before removing a platform or other facility in the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, or not more than 2 years after the submittal of an initial platform removal application to the Pacific OCS Region and the Alaska OCS Region	Include information required under §250.1727.
(c) Post-removal report for a platform or other facility	Within 30 days after you remove a platform or other facility	Include information required under §250.1729.
(d) Pipeline decommissioning application	Before you decommission a pipeline	Include information required under §250.1751(a) or §250.1752(a), as applicable.
(e) Post-pipeline decommissioning report	Within 30 days after you decommission a pipeline	Include information required under §250.1753.
(f) Site clearance report for a platform or other facility	Within 30 days after you complete site clearance verification activities	Include information required under §250.1743(b).
(g) Form MMS–124, Application for Permit to Modify (APM). The submission of your APM must be accompanied by payment of the service fee listed in §250.125	(1) Before you temporarily abandon or permanently plug a well or zone (2) Within 30 days after you plug a well * * *	Include information required under §§250.1712 and 250.1721. Include information required under §250.1717.
	(3) Before you install a subsea protective device	Refer to §250.1722(a).

	(4) Within 30 days after you complete a protective device trawl test	Include information required under §250.1722(d).
	(5) Before you remove any casing stub or mud line suspension equipment and any subsea protective device	Refer to §250.1723.
	(6) Within 30 days after you complete site clearance verification activities	Include information required under §250.1743(a).

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 44265, July 1, 2002; 67 FR 66047, Oct. 30, 2002, as amended at 71 FR 40913, July 19, 2006]

### **Permanently Plugging Wells**

#### **§ 250.1710 When must I permanently plug all wells on a lease?**

You must permanently plug all wells on a lease within 1 year after the lease terminates.

#### **§ 250.1711 When will MMS order me to permanently plug a well?**

MMS will order you to permanently plug a well if that well:

- (a) Poses a hazard to safety or the environment; or
- (b) Is not useful for lease operations and is not capable of oil, gas, or sulphur production in paying quantities.

#### **§ 250.1712 What information must I submit before I permanently plug a well or zone?**

Before you permanently plug a well or zone, you must submit form MMS–124, Application for Permit to Modify, to the appropriate District Manager and receive approval. A request for approval must contain the following information:

- (a) The reason you are plugging the well (or zone), for completions with production amounts specified by the Regional Supervisor, along with substantiating information demonstrating its lack of capacity for further profitable production of oil, gas, or sulfur;
- (b) Recent well test data and pressure data, if available;
- (c) Maximum possible surface pressure, and how it was determined;
- (d) Type and weight of well-control fluid you will use;
- (e) A description of the work; and
- (f) A current and proposed well schematic and description that includes:
  - (1) Well depth;

- (2) All perforated intervals that have not been plugged;
- (3) Casing and tubing depths and details;
- (4) Subsurface equipment;
- (5) Estimated tops of cement (and the basis of the estimate) in each casing annulus;
- (6) Plug locations;
- (7) Plug types;
- (8) Plug lengths;
- (9) Properties of mud and cement to be used;
- (10) Perforating and casing cutting plans;
- (11) Plug testing plans;
- (12) Casing removal (including information on explosives, if used);
- (13) Proposed casing removal depth; and
- (14) Your plans to protect archaeological and sensitive biological features, including anchor damage during plugging operations, a brief assessment of the environmental impacts of the plugging operations, and the procedures and mitigation measures you will take to minimize such impacts.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66048, Oct. 30, 2002]

**§ 250.1713 Must I notify MMS before I begin well plugging operations?**

You must notify the appropriate District Manager at least 48 hours before beginning operations to permanently plug a well.

**§ 250.1714 What must I accomplish with well plugs?**

You must ensure that all well plugs:

- (a) Provide downhole isolation of hydrocarbon and sulphur zones;
- (b) Protect freshwater aquifers; and
- (c) Prevent migration of formation fluids within the wellbore or to the seafloor.

**§ 250.1715 How must I permanently plug a well?**

(a) You must permanently plug wells according to the table in this section. The District Manager may require additional well plugs as necessary.

### Permanent Well Plugging Requirements

If you have—	Then you must use—
(1) Zones in open hole	Cement plug(s) set from at least 100 feet below the bottom to 100 feet above the top of oil, gas, and fresh-water zones to isolate fluids in the strata.
(2) Open hole below casing	<p>(i) A cement plug, set by the displacement method, at least 100 feet above and below deepest casing shoe;</p> <p>(ii) A cement retainer with effective back-pressure control set 50 to 100 feet above the casing shoe, and a cement plug that extends at least 100 feet below the casing shoe and at least 50 feet above the retainer; or</p> <p>(iii) A bridge plug set 50 feet to 100 feet above the shoe with 50 feet of cement on top of the bridge plug, for expected or known lost circulation conditions.</p>
(3) A perforated zone that is currently open and not previously squeezed or isolated	<p>(i) A method to squeeze cement to all perforations;</p> <p>(ii) A cement plug set by the displacement method, at least 100 feet above to 100 feet below the perforated interval, or down to a casing plug, whichever is less; or</p> <p>(iii) If the perforated zones are isolated from the hole below, you may use any of the plugs specified in paragraphs (a)(3)(iii)(A) through (E) of this section instead of those specified in paragraphs (a)(3)(i) and (a)(3)(ii) of this section.</p> <p>(A) A cement retainer with effective back-pressure control set 50 to 100 feet above the top of the perforated interval, and a cement plug that extends at least 100 feet below the bottom of the perforated interval with at least 50 feet of cement above the retainer;</p> <p>(B) A bridge plug set 50 to 100 feet above the top of the perforated interval and at least 50 feet of cement on top of the bridge plug;</p> <p>(C) A cement plug at least 200 feet in length, set by the displacement method, with the bottom of the plug no more than 100 feet above the perforated interval;</p> <p>(D) A through-tubing basket plug set no more than 100 feet above the perforated interval with at least 50 feet of cement on top of the basket plug; or</p> <p>(E) A tubing plug set no more than 100 feet above the perforated interval topped with a sufficient volume of cement so as to extend at least 100 feet above the uppermost packer in the wellbore and at least 300 feet of cement in the casing annulus immediately above the packer.</p>

(4) A casing stub where the stub end is within the casing	(i) A cement plug set at least 100 feet above and below the stub end; (ii) A cement retainer or bridge plug set at least 50 to 100 feet above the stub end with at least 50 feet of cement on top of the retainer or bridge plug; or (iii) A cement plug at least 200 feet long with the bottom of the plug set no more than 100 feet above the stub end.
(5) A casing stub where the stub end is below the casing	A plug as specified in paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2) of this section, as applicable.
(6) An annular space that communicates with open hole and extends to the mud line	A cement plug at least 200 feet long set in the annular space. For a well completed above the ocean surface, you must pressure test each casing annulus to verify isolation.
(7) A subsea well with unsealed annulus	A cutter to sever the casing, and you must set a stub plug as specified in paragraphs (a)(4) and (a)(5) of this section.
(8) A well with casing	A cement surface plug at least 150 feet long set in the smallest casing that extends to the mud line with the top of the plug no more than 150 feet below the mud line.
(9) Fluid left in the hole	A fluid in the intervals between the plugs that is dense enough to exert a hydrostatic pressure that is greater than the formation pressures in the intervals.
(10) Permafrost areas	(i) A fluid to be left in the hole that has a freezing point below the temperature of the permafrost, and a treatment to inhibit corrosion; and (ii) Cement plugs designed to set before freezing and have a low heat of hydration.

(b) You must test the first plug below the surface plug and all plugs in lost circulation areas that are in open hole. The plug must pass one of the following tests to verify plug integrity:

(1) A pipe weight of at least 15,000 pounds on the plug; or

(2) A pump pressure of at least 1,000 pounds per square inch. Ensure that the pressure does not drop more than 10 percent in 15 minutes. The District Manager may require you to tests other plug(s).

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 44265, July 1, 2002; 67 FR 66048, Oct. 30, 2002]

**§ 250.1716 To what depth must I remove wellheads and casings?**

(a) Unless the District Manager approves an alternate depth under paragraph (b) of this section, you must remove all wellheads and casings to at least 15 feet below the mud line.

(b) The District Manager may approve an alternate removal depth if:

(1) The wellhead or casing would not become an obstruction to other users of the seafloor or area, and geotechnical and other information you provide demonstrate that erosional processes capable of exposing the obstructions are not expected; or

(2) You determine, and MMS concurs, that you must use divers, and the seafloor sediment stability poses safety concerns; or

(3) The water depth is greater than 800 meters (2,624 feet).

**§ 250.1717 After I permanently plug a well, what information must I submit?**

Within 30 days after you permanently plug a well, you must submit form MMS–124, Application for Permit to Modify (subsequent report), to the appropriate District Manager, and include the following information:

(a) Information included in §250.1712 with a final well schematic;

(b) Description of the plugging work;

(c) Nature and quantities of material used in the plugs; and

(d) If you cut and pulled any casing string, the following information:

(1) A description of the methods used (including information on explosives, if used);

(2) Size and amount of casing removed; and

(3) Casing removal depth.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66049, Oct. 30, 2002]

**Temporary Abandoned Wells**

**§ 250.1721 If I temporarily abandon a well that I plan to re-enter, what must I do?**

You may temporarily abandon a well when it is necessary for proper development and production of a lease. To temporarily abandon a well, you must do all of the following:

(a) Submit form MMS–124, Application for Permit to Modify, and the applicable information required by §250.1712 to the appropriate District Manager and receive approval;

(b) Adhere to the plugging and testing requirements for permanently plugged wells listed in the table in §250.1715, except for §250.1715 (a)(8). You do not need to sever the casings, remove the wellhead, or clear the site;

(c) Set a bridge plug or a cement plug at least 100-feet long at the base of the deepest casing string, unless the casing string has been cemented and has not been drilled out. If a cement plug is set, it is not necessary for the cement plug to extend below the casing shoe into the open hole;

(d) Set a retrievable or a permanent-type bridge plug or a cement plug at least 100 feet long in the inner-most casing. The top of the bridge plug or cement plug must be no more than 1,000 feet below the mud line. MMS

may consider approving alternate requirements for subsea wells case-by-case;

(e) Identify and report subsea wellheads, casing stubs, or other obstructions that extend above the mud line according to U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) requirements; and

(f) Except in water depths greater than 300 feet, protect subsea wellheads, casing stubs, mud line suspensions, or other obstructions remaining above the seafloor by using one of the following methods, as approved by the District Manager or Regional Supervisor:

(1) A caisson designed according to 30 CFR 250, subpart I, and equipped with aids to navigation;

(2) A jacket designed according to 30 CFR 250, subpart I, and equipped with aids to navigation; or

(3) A subsea protective device that meets the requirements in §250.1722.

(g) Within 30 days after you temporarily plug a well, you must submit form MMS–124, Application for Permit to Modify (subsequent report), and include the following information:

(1) Information included in §250.1712 with a well schematic;

(2) Information required by §250.1717(b), (c), and (d); and

(3) A description of any remaining subsea wellheads, casing stubs, mudline suspension equipment, or other obstructions that extend above the seafloor.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66049, Oct. 30, 2002]

### **§ 250.1722 If I install a subsea protective device, what requirements must I meet?**

If you install a subsea protective device under §250.1721(f)(3), you must install it in a manner that allows fishing gear to pass over the obstruction without damage to the obstruction, the protective device, or the fishing gear.

(a) Use form MMS–124, Application for Permit to Modify to request approval from the appropriate District Manager to install a subsea protective device.

(b) The protective device may not extend more than 10 feet above the seafloor (unless MMS approves otherwise).

(c) You must trawl over the protective device when you install it (adhere to the requirements at §250.1741 (d) through (h)). If the trawl does not pass over the protective device or causes damage to it, you must notify the appropriate District Manager within 5 days and perform remedial action within 30 days of the trawl;

(d) Within 30 days after you complete the trawling test described in paragraph (c) of this section, submit a report to the appropriate District Manager using form MMS–124, Application for Permit to Modify, that includes the following:

(1) The date(s) the trawling test was performed and the vessel that was used;

(2) A plat at an appropriate scale showing the trawl lines;

(3) A description of the trawling operation and the net(s) that were used;

- (4) An estimate by the trawling contractor of the seafloor penetration depth achieved by the trawl;
- (5) A summary of the results of the trawling test including a discussion of any snags and interruptions, a description of any damage to the protective covering, the casing stub or mud line suspension equipment, or the trawl, and a discussion of any snag removals requiring diver assistance; and
- (6) A letter signed by your authorized representative stating that he/she witnessed the trawling test.
- (e) If a temporarily abandoned well is protected by a subsea device installed in a water depth less than 100 feet, mark the site with a buoy installed according to the USCG requirements.
- (f) Provide annual reports to the Regional Supervisor describing your plans to either re-enter and complete the well or to permanently plug the well.
- (g) Ensure that all subsea wellheads, casing stubs, mud line suspensions, or other obstructions in water depths less than 300 feet remain protected.
- (1) To confirm that the subsea protective covering remains properly installed, either conduct a visual inspection or perform a trawl test at least annually.
- (2) If the inspection reveals that a casing stub or mud line suspension is no longer properly protected, or if the trawl does not pass over the subsea protective covering without causing damage to the covering, the casing stub or mud line suspension equipment, or the trawl, notify the appropriate District Manager within 5 days, and perform the necessary remedial work within 30 days of discovery of the problem.
- (3) In your annual report required by paragraph (f) of this section, include the inspection date, results, and method used and a description of any remedial work you will perform or have performed.
- (h) You may request approval to waive the trawling test required by paragraph (c) of this section if you plan to use either:
  - (1) A buoy with automatic tracking capabilities installed and maintained according to USCG requirements at 33 CFR part 67 (or its successor); or
  - (2) A design and installation method that has been proven successful by trawl testing of previous protective devices of the same design and installed in areas with similar bottom conditions.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66049, Oct. 30, 2002]

**§ 250.1723 What must I do when it is no longer necessary to maintain a well in temporary abandoned status?**

If you or MMS determines that continued maintenance of a well in a temporary abandoned status is not necessary for the proper development or production of a lease, you must:

- (a) Promptly and permanently plug the well according to §250.1715;
- (b) Remove any casing stub or mud line suspension equipment and any subsea protective covering. You must submit a request for approval to perform such work to the appropriate District Manager using form MMS-124, Application for Permit to Modify; and
- (c) Clear the well site according to §250.1740 through §250.1742.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66049, Oct. 30, 2002]

## **Removing Platforms and Other Facilities**

### **§ 250.1725 When do I have to remove platforms and other facilities?**

(a) You must remove all platforms and other facilities within 1 year after the lease or pipeline right-of-way terminates, unless you receive approval to maintain the structure to conduct other activities. Platforms include production platforms, well jackets, single-well caissons, and pipeline accessory platforms. Other activities include those supporting OCS oil and gas production and transportation, as well as other energy-related or marine-related uses (including LNG) for which adequate financial assurance for decommissioning has been provided to a Federal agency which has given MMS a commitment that it has and will exercise authority to compel the performance of decommissioning within a time following cessation of the new use acceptable to MMS. The approval will specify:

- (1) Whether you must continue to maintain any financial assurance for decommissioning; and
  - (2) Whether, and under what circumstances, you must perform any decommissioning not performed by the new facility owner/user.
- (b) Before you may remove a platform or other facility, you must submit a final removal application to the Regional Supervisor for approval and include the information listed in §250.1727.
- (c) You must remove a platform or other facility according to the approved application.
- (d) You must flush all production risers with seawater before you remove them.
- (e) You must notify the Regional Supervisor at least 48 hours before you begin the removal operations.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002, as amended at 74 FR 19807, Apr. 29, 2009]

### **§ 250.1726 When must I submit an initial platform removal application and what must it include?**

An initial platform removal application is required only for leases and pipeline rights-of-way in the Pacific OCS Region or the Alaska OCS Region. It must include the following information:

- (a) Platform or other facility removal procedures, including the types of vessels and equipment you will use;
- (b) Facilities (including pipelines) you plan to remove or leave in place;
- (c) Platform or other facility transportation and disposal plans;
- (d) Plans to protect marine life and the environment during decommissioning operations, including a brief assessment of the environmental impacts of the operations, and procedures and mitigation measures that you will take to minimize the impacts; and
- (e) A projected decommissioning schedule.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66049, Oct. 30, 2002]

### **§ 250.1727 What information must I include in my final application to remove a platform or**

**other facility?**

You must submit to the Regional Supervisor, a final application for approval to remove a platform or other facility. Your application must be accompanied by payment of the service fee listed in §250.125. If you are proposing to use explosives, provide three copies of the application. If you are not proposing to use explosives, provide two copies of the application. Include the following information in the final removal application, as applicable:

(a) Identification of the applicant including:

- (1) Lease operator/pipeline right-of-way holder;
- (2) Address;
- (3) Contact person and telephone number; and
- (4) Shore base.

(b) Identification of the structure you are removing including:

- (1) Platform Name/MMS Complex ID Number;
- (2) Location (lease/right-of-way, area, block, and block coordinates);
- (3) Date installed (year);
- (4) Proposed date of removal (Month/Year); and
- (5) Water depth.

(c) Description of the structure you are removing including:

- (1) Configuration (attach a photograph or a diagram);
  - (2) Size;
  - (3) Number of legs/casings/pilings;
  - (4) Diameter and wall thickness of legs/casings/pilings;
  - (5) Whether piles are grouted inside or outside;
  - (6) Brief description of soil composition and condition;
  - (7) The sizes and weights of the jacket, topsides (by module), conductors, and pilings; and
  - (8) The maximum removal lift weight and estimated number of main lifts to remove the structure.
- (d) A description, including anchor pattern, of the vessel(s) you will use to remove the structure.

(e) Identification of the purpose, including:

(1) Lease expiration/right-of-way relinquishment date; and

(2) Reason for removing the structure.

(f) A description of the removal method, including:

(1) A brief description of the method you will use;

(2) If you are using explosives, the following:

(i) Type of explosives;

(ii) Number and sizes of charges;

(iii) Whether you are using single shot or multiple shots;

(iv) If multiple shots, the sequence and timing of detonations;

(v) Whether you are using a bulk or shaped charge;

(vi) Depth of detonation below the mud line; and

(vii) Whether you are placing the explosives inside or outside of the pilings;

(3) If you will use divers or acoustic devices to conduct a pre-removal survey to detect the presence of turtles and marine mammals, a description of the proposed detection method; and

(4) A statement whether or not you will use transducers to measure the pressure and impulse of the detonations.

(g) Your plans for transportation and disposal (including as an artificial reef) or salvage of the removed platform.

(h) If available, the results of any recent biological surveys conducted in the vicinity of the structure and recent observations of turtles or marine mammals at the structure site.

(i) Your plans to protect archaeological and sensitive biological features during removal operations, including a brief assessment of the environmental impacts of the removal operations and procedures and mitigation measures you will take to minimize such impacts.

(j) A statement whether or not you will use divers to survey the area after removal to determine any effects on marine life.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002, as amended at 71 FR 40913, July 19, 2006]

**§ 250.1728 To what depth must I remove a platform or other facility?**

(a) Unless the Regional Supervisor approves an alternate depth under paragraph (b) of this section, you must remove all platforms and other facilities (including templates and pilings) to at least 15 feet below the mud

line.

(b) The Regional Supervisor may approve an alternate removal depth if:

(1) The remaining structure would not become an obstruction to other users of the seafloor or area, and geotechnical and other information you provide demonstrate that erosional processes capable of exposing the obstructions are not expected; or

(2) You determine, and MMS concurs, that you must use divers and the seafloor sediment stability poses safety concerns; or

(3) The water depth is greater than 800 meters (2,624 feet).

**§ 250.1729 After I remove a platform or other facility, what information must I submit?**

Within 30 days after you remove a platform or other facility, you must submit a written report to the Regional Supervisor that includes the following:

(a) A summary of the removal operation including the date it was completed;

(b) A description of any mitigation measures you took; and

(c) A statement signed by your authorized representative that certifies that the types and amount of explosives you used in removing the platform or other facility were consistent with those set forth in the approved removal application.

**§ 250.1730 When might MMS approve partial structure removal or toppling in place?**

The Regional Supervisor may grant a departure from the requirement to remove a platform or other facility by approving partial structure removal or toppling in place for conversion to an artificial reef if you meet the following conditions:

(a) The structure becomes part of a State artificial reef program, and the responsible State agency acquires a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and accepts title and liability for the structure; and

(b) You satisfy any U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) navigational requirements for the structure.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002, as amended at 74 FR 19807, Apr. 29, 2009]

**§ 250.1731 Who is responsible for decommissioning an OCS facility subject to an Alternate Use RUE?**

(a) The holder of an Alternate Use RUE issued under part 285 of this subchapter is responsible for all decommissioning obligations that accrue following the issuance of the Alternate Use RUE and which pertain to the Alternate Use RUE. See 30 CFR part 285, subpart J, for additional information concerning the decommissioning responsibilities of an Alternate Use RUE grant holder.

(b) The lessee under the lease originally issued under 30 CFR part 256 will remain responsible for decommissioning obligations that accrued before issuance of the Alternate Use RUE, as well as for decommissioning obligations that accrue following issuance of the Alternate Use RUE to the extent associated with continued activities authorized under this part.

(c) If a lease issued under 30 CFR part 256 is cancelled or otherwise terminated under any provision of this

subchapter, the lessee, upon our approval, may defer removal of any OCS facility within the lease area that is subject to an Alternate Use RUE. If we elect to grant such a deferral, the lessee remains responsible for removing the facility upon termination of the Alternate Use RUE and will be required to retain sufficient bonding or other financial assurances to ensure that the structure is removed or otherwise decommissioned in accordance with the provisions of this subpart.

[74 FR 19807, Apr. 29, 2009]

### **Site Clearance for Wells, Platforms, and Other Facilities**

#### **§ 250.1740 How must I verify that the site of a permanently plugged well, removed platform, or other removed facility is clear of obstructions?**

Within 60 days after you permanently plug a well or remove a platform or other facility, you must verify that the site is clear of obstructions by using one of the following methods:

(a) For a well site, you must either:

- (1) Drag a trawl over the site;
- (2) Scan across the location using sonar equipment;
- (3) Inspect the site using a diver;
- (4) Videotape the site using a camera on a remotely operated vehicle (ROV); or
- (5) Use another method approved by the District Manager if the particular site conditions warrant.

(b) For a platform or other facility site in water depths less than 300 feet, you must drag a trawl over the site.

(c) For a platform or other facility site in water depths 300 feet or more, you must either:

- (1) Drag a trawl over the site;
- (2) Scan across the site using sonar equipment; or
- (3) Use another method approved by the Regional Supervisor if the particular site conditions warrant.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66049, Oct. 30, 2002]

#### **§ 250.1741 If I drag a trawl across a site, what requirements must I meet?**

If you drag a trawl across the site in accordance with §250.1740, you must meet all of the requirements of this section.

(a) You must drag the trawl in a grid-like pattern as shown in the following table:

<b>For a—</b>	<b>You must drag the trawl across a—</b>
(1) Well site	300-foot-radius circle centered on the well

	location.
(2) Subsea well site	600-foot-radius circle centered on the well location.
(3) Platform site	1,320-foot-radius circle centered on the location of the platform.
(4) Single-well caisson, well protector jacket, template, or manifold	600-foot-radius circle centered on the structure location.

(b) You must trawl 100 percent of the limits described in paragraph (a) of this section in two directions.

(c) You must mark the area to be cleared as a hazard to navigation according to USCG requirements until you complete the site clearance procedures.

(d) You must use a trawling vessel equipped with a calibrated navigational positioning system capable of providing position accuracy of  $\pm 30$  feet.

(e) You must use a trawling net that is representative of those used in the commercial fishing industry (one that has a net strength equal or greater than that provided by No. 18 twine).

(f) You must ensure that you trawl no closer than 300 feet from a shipwreck, and 500 feet from a sensitive biological feature.

(g) If you trawl near an active pipeline, you must meet the requirements in the following table:

<b>For—</b>	<b>You must trawl —</b>	<b>And you must—</b>
(1) Buried active pipelines		First contact the pipeline owner or operator to determine the condition of the pipeline before trawling over the buried pipeline.
(2) Unburied active pipelines that are 8 inches in diameter or larger	no closer than 100 feet to the either side of the pipeline	Trawl parallel to the pipeline. Do not trawl across the pipeline.
(3) Unburied smaller diameter active pipelines in the trawl area that have obstructions (e.g., pipeline valves) present	no closer than 100 feet to either side of the pipeline.	Trawl parallel to the pipeline. Do not trawl across the pipeline.
(4) Unburied active pipelines in the trawl area that are smaller than 8 inches in diameter and have no obstructions present	parallel to the pipeline.	

(h) You must ensure that any trawling contractor you may use:

(1) Has no corporate or other financial ties to you; and

(2) Has a valid commercial trawling license for both the vessel and its captain.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 44266, July 1, 2002; 67 FR 66049, Oct. 30, 2002]

**§ 250.1742 What other methods can I use to verify that a site is clear?**

If you do not trawl a site, you can verify that the site is clear of obstructions by using any of the methods shown in the following table:

<b>If you use—</b>	<b>You must—</b>	<b>And you must—</b>
(a) Sonar	cover 100 percent of the appropriate grid area listed in §250.1741(a)	Use a sonar signal with a frequency of at least 500 kHz.
(b) A diver	ensure that the diver visually inspects 100 percent of the appropriate grid area listed in §250.1741(a)	Ensure that the diver uses a search pattern of concentric circles or parallel lines spaced no more than 10 feet apart.
(c) An ROV (remotely operated vehicle)	ensure that the ROV camera records videotape over 100 percent of the appropriate grid area listed in §250.1741(a)	Ensure that the ROV uses a pattern of concentric circles or parallel lines spaced no more than 10 feet apart.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 44266, July 1, 2002]

**§ 250.1743 How do I certify that a site is clear of obstructions?**

(a) For a well site, you must submit to the appropriate District Manager within 30 days after you complete the verification activities a form MMS-124, Application for Permit to Modify, to include the following information:

(1) A signed certification that the well site area is cleared of all obstructions;

(2) The date the verification work was performed and the vessel used;

(3) The extent of the area surveyed;

(4) The survey method used;

(5) The results of the survey, including a list of any debris removed or a statement from the trawling contractor that no objects were recovered; and

(6) A post-trawling job plot or map showing the trawled area.

(b) For a platform or other facility site, you must submit the following information to the appropriate Regional Supervisor within 30 days after you complete the verification activities:

- (1) A letter signed by an authorized company official certifying that the platform or other facility site area is cleared of all obstructions and that a company representative witnessed the verification activities;
- (2) A letter signed by an authorized official of the company that performed the verification work for you certifying that they cleared the platform or other facility site area of all obstructions;
- (3) The date the verification work was performed and the vessel used;
- (4) The extent of the area surveyed;
- (5) The survey method used;
- (6) The results of the survey, including a list of any debris removed or a statement from the trawling contractor that no objects were recovered; and
- (7) A post-trawling job plot or map showing the trawled area.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002; 67 FR 66049, Oct. 30, 2002]

## **Pipeline Decommissioning**

### **§ 250.1750 When may I decommission a pipeline in place?**

You may decommission a pipeline in place when the Regional Supervisor determines that the pipeline does not constitute a hazard (obstruction) to navigation and commercial fishing operations, unduly interfere with other uses of the OCS, or have adverse environmental effects.

### **§ 250.1751 How do I decommission a pipeline in place?**

You must do the following to decommission a pipeline in place:

(a) Submit a pipeline decommissioning application in triplicate to the Regional Supervisor for approval. Your application must be accompanied by payment of the service fee listed in §250.125. Your application must include the following information:

- (1) Reason for the operation;
  - (2) Proposed decommissioning procedures;
  - (3) Length (feet) of segment to be decommissioned; and
  - (4) Length (feet) of segment remaining.
- (b) Pig the pipeline, unless the Regional Supervisor determines that pigging is not practical;
  - (c) Flush the pipeline;
  - (d) Fill the pipeline with seawater;
  - (e) Cut and plug each end of the pipeline;
  - (f) Bury each end of the pipeline at least 3 feet below the seafloor or cover each end with protective concrete

mats, if required by the Regional Supervisor; and

(g) Remove all pipeline valves and other fittings that could unduly interfere with other uses of the OCS.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002, as amended at 71 FR 40913, July 19, 2006]

### **§ 250.1752 How do I remove a pipeline?**

Before removing a pipeline, you must:

(a) Submit a pipeline removal application in triplicate to the Regional Supervisor for approval. Your application must be accompanied by payment of the service fee listed in §250.125. Your application must include the following information:

- (1) Proposed removal procedures;
  - (2) If the Regional Supervisor requires it, a description, including anchor pattern(s), of the vessel(s) you will use to remove the pipeline;
  - (3) Length (feet) to be removed;
  - (4) Length (feet) of the segment that will remain in place;
  - (5) Plans for transportation of the removed pipe for disposal or salvage;
  - (6) Plans to protect archaeological and sensitive biological features during removal operations, including a brief assessment of the environmental impacts of the removal operations and procedures and mitigation measures that you will take to minimize such impacts; and
  - (7) Projected removal schedule and duration.
- (b) Pig the pipeline, unless the Regional Supervisor determines that pigging is not practical; and
- (c) Flush the pipeline.

[67 FR 35406, May 17, 2002, as amended at 71 FR 40913, July 19, 2006]

### **§ 250.1753 After I decommission a pipeline, what information must I submit?**

Within 30 days after you decommission a pipeline, you must submit a written report to the Regional Supervisor that includes the following:

- (a) A summary of the decommissioning operation including the date it was completed;
- (b) A description of any mitigation measures you took; and
- (c) A statement signed by your authorized representative that certifies that the pipeline was decommissioned according to the approved application.

### **§ 250.1754 When must I remove a pipeline decommissioned in place?**

You must remove a pipeline decommissioned in place if the Regional Supervisor determines that the pipeline

is an obstruction.