

# **MEMBER ALERT**



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## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS RELATED TO THE LOSS OF THE MOBILE OFFSHORE DRILLING UNIT "DEEPWATER HORIZON" IN THE GULF OF MEXICO**

As Members will no doubt be aware, on April 20, 2010, a loss of well control resulted in an explosion and fire aboard the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) DEEPWATER HORIZON. The MODU had been operating 52 miles from shore in 4,992 feet (1,513 meters) of water.

Unfortunately, eleven lives were lost in the accident and the well has yet to be secured. This is causing the significant release of oil which currently threatens sensitive coastlines and resources in the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Waterway Status and Vessel Cleaning Stations**

The Southwest Pass remains open to deep draft vessels and is free of any restrictions to marine traffic. It is the intent of the Captain of the Port of New Orleans to facilitate the movement of marine traffic to the fullest extent possible throughout the duration of the oil spill response. To that end, the Coast Guard will examine all measures necessary to ensure commerce through the Mississippi River and the Intracoastal Waterway continues with a minimum of restrictions.

Two vessel decontamination stations have been established on the Lower Mississippi River. The Associated Branch Pilots (Bar Pilots) report that no vessels entering Southwest Pass have reported any sheening or presence of oil on any vessel, but decontamination stations are standing by in the event a vessel needs cleaning prior to transiting the Lower Mississippi River. Stations are located near "The Jump" at Venice, LA and at Boothville, LA in the vicinity of Fort Jackson.

Arriving vessels shall proceed to one of the two cleaning stations if there is a visible sheen emanating from the ship's hull. Vessel cleaning will be coordinated with the New Orleans Decon Group via VHF Channel 16, through the pilot directing the vessel's movement, once it has been determined that the vessel is actively sheening. These cleaning stations are only intended for those vessels which are sheening, and which therefore must be cleaned. Vessels for which cleaning is desired, but which do not meet this criterion, should have cleaning arranged for them, for which reimbursement should be sought through the claims process, if it is believed that they were oiled by the current spill in the Gulf of Mexico. British Petroleum Claims can be reached at the following phone number: 1-800-440-0858.

Additional information can be obtained from the following contacts:

Coast Guard Sector New Orleans Command Center: +1 (504) 846-5923 Coast Guard Waterways Management: (504) 565-5103 or (504) 565-5108 or email to [D08-PF-secneworleans-waterways@uscg.mil](mailto:D08-PF-secneworleans-waterways@uscg.mil).

Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Center Lower Mississippi River: VHF-FM Channel 12 or +1 (504) 589-2780

### **Updates on the Movement of the Spill**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are providing daily updates on the movement of the spill. These updates can be found at their website at: <http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/index.php>.