Only an Operator Is Positioned to Manage Safety



"The operating leaseholder company is the only entity involved in offshore drilling that is positioned to manage the overall system safety of well drilling and rig operations."

Macondo Well-Deepwater Horizon Blowout: Lessons for Offshore Drilling Safety

Industry Management of Offshore Drilling

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Questions have also been raised as to whether a process is in place to give adequate consideration to the overall risks associated with drilling a Macondo-type well in the Gulf of Mexico.

Summary Finding 5.1: The actions, policies, and procedures of the corporations involved did not provide an effective system safety approach commensurate with the risks of the Macondo well. The lack of a strong safety culture resulting from a deficient overall systems approach to safety is evident in the multiple flawed decisions that led to the blowout. Industrial management involved with the Macondo well-Deepwater Horizon disaster failed to appreciate or plan for the safety challenges presented by the Macondo well-

Observation

Summary Observation 5.1: The ability of the oil and gas industry to perform and maintain an integrated assessment of the margins of safety for a complex well like Macondo is impacted by the complex structure of the offshore oil and gas industry and the divisions of technical expertise among the many contractors engaged in the drilling effort.

Observation 5.2: Processes within the oil and gas industry to assess adequately the integrated risks associated with drilling a deepwater well, such as Macondo, are currently lacking.

Observation 5.3: As offshore drilling extends into deeper water, its complexity increases. However, in-house technical capabilities within many operating companies for well drilling operations have diminished in favor of reliance on multiple contractors. This, in turn, diminishes the capacity of operations companies (the "operation") to assess and integrate the multiplicity of factors potentially affecting the safety of the well.

Observation 5.4: The operating leaseholder company is the only entity involved in offshore drilling that is positioned to manage the overall system safety of well drilling and rig operations.

The rapid evolution of deepwater drilling operations has challenged management of E&P companies to have in-house expertise in the complexities, risk, and system safety of deepwater operations and with monitoring capabilities for supporting the decision-making levels in a timely manner.

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