

# MMS Director Rosenbusch praises IADC WellCAP

**WELLCAP IS A GREAT** example of an industry-driven initiative and what MMS considers a “very timely standard”, remarked **US Minerals Management Service Director Walter Rosenbusch**, speaking at the 1999 IADC Annual Meeting. Mr Rosenbusch also indicated that the agency hoped to issue its final rule on performance-based training for OCS operations by the end of the year.

Earlier this year, MMS announced plans to move from direct oversight and certification of well-control training schools to a system in which operators would themselves be responsible for meeting training standards. Most recently, the agency has indicated that WellCAP, the IADC Well Control Accreditation Program, could serve as a 3rd-party standard for well-control training on the US OCS.

However, Mr Rosenbusch, delivering the keynote address at the **Hughes Christensen**-sponsored luncheon, stressed that ultimately, the operator is answerable for accident prevention on offshore facilities and rigs.

“We believe that safety is the responsibility of the operator,” he said.

Still, Mr Rosenbusch noted that contractors of all types are an increasingly important part of the OCS industrial mix. Noting the increasing proportion of contractors on the OCS, he said that 4 of 5 workers are now employed by contractors.

“MMS must address the reality of the working environment on the OCS,” he said. New hires, he said, must receive adequate training and build experience. Mr Rosenbusch also mentioned that the International Oil and Gas Producers Association, formerly E&P Forum, is restructuring to focus on contracts and contractors. For its part, MMS is continually gathering accident data through a performance measures work group, he said.

**Don Howard**, MMS Regional Supervisor for Gulf of Mexico Field Operations, also a speaker at the IADC Annual Meeting, said training plans should include procedures for evaluating contractors, as well as training and job qualification requirements for certain employees, and audit procedures. The plan should also include procedures to maintain, verify and enhance employee skills. Training should cover operational procedures, safe working practices and emergency response. Recordkeeping and documentation should be institutionalized, he said.

Mr Howard addressed some of the concerns industry had raised regarding the performance-based training rule. “One of the big things we heard was that this doesn’t need to be for all people ... going offshore,” he said. “I tend to disagree to some extent. We need some general training for everyone going offshore.”

The plan also calls for a variety of evaluation methods by MMS, including audits, written tests, employee interviews and the most controversial item, hands-on testing.

“Everyone’s focused on the hands on,” Mr Howard said, explaining that some worried that MMS would shut down operations to conduct the tests.

“That’s not our intent,” he assured the audience. However, Mr Howard said, this could happen at training institutions.

## SEMP

Mr Howard said that under SEMP, the agency has conducted 7 audits with operators, which he described as “quite interesting”. While the focus is on the operator, Mr Howard says they will conduct contractor audits if necessary, especially as part of SubPart O regulations.

Mr Howard also thanked IADC Director-Offshore Technical and Regulatory Affairs **Alan Spackman** for his role in helping along the latest edition of RP 75, the SEMP spec. This edition, Mr Howard says, attempts to bridge the gap between operators’ SEMP and contractors’ safety-management programs. ■

**MMS Director Walter M Rosenbusch: IADC WellCAP is a “very timely standard”.**

