

until either the marine mammal(s) are more than 3,000 ft (910 m) from the platform or actions (e.g., operating a vessel in the vicinity of the dolphins to stimulate bow riding, then steering the vessel away from the structure to be removed) are successful in removing them at least 3,000 ft (910 m) from the detonation site;

(ii) Whenever the conditions described in paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section occur, the aerial survey required under §216.145(b)(1) must be repeated prior to detonation of charges if the timing requirements of §216.145(b)(1) cannot be met.

(2) Detonation of explosives must occur no earlier than 1 hour after sunrise and no later than 1 hour before sunset;

(3) If weather and/or sea conditions preclude adequate aerial, shipboard or subsurface surveillance, detonations must be delayed until conditions improve sufficiently for surveillance to be undertaken; and

(4) Detonations must be staggered by a minimum of 0.9 seconds for each group of charges.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

§216.144 Prohibitions.

Notwithstanding takings authorized by §216.143 or by a Letter of Authorization issued under §216.106, the following activities are prohibited:

(a) The taking of a marine mammal that is other than unintentional, except that the intentional passive herding of dolphins from the vicinity of the platform may be authorized under section 109(h) of the Act as described in a Letter of Authorization;

(b) The violation of, or failure to comply with, the terms, conditions, and requirements of this part or a Letter of Authorization issued or renewed under §216.106 or §216.146;

(c) The incidental taking of any marine mammal of a species either not specified in this subpart or whenever the incidental taking authorization for authorized species has been reached; and

(d) The use of single explosive charges having an impulse and pressure greater than that generated by a 50-lb

(22.7 kg) explosive charge detonated outside the rig piling.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

§216.145 Requirements for monitoring and reporting.

(a) Observer(s) approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service in advance of the detonation must be used to monitor the area around the site prior to, during, and after detonation of charges.

(b)(1) Both before and after each detonation episode, an aerial survey by NMFS-approved observers must be conducted for a period not less than 30 minutes within 1 hour of the detonation episode. To ensure that no marine mammals are within the designated 3,000 ft (1,000 yd, 941 m) safety zone nor are likely to enter the designated safety zone prior to or at the time of detonation, the pre-detonation survey must encompass all waters within one nautical mile of the structure.

(2) A second post-detonation aerial or vessel survey of the detonation site must be conducted no earlier than 48 hours and no later than 1 week after the oil and gas structure is removed, unless a systematic underwater survey, either by divers or remotely-operated vehicles, dedicated to marine mammals and sea turtles, of the site has been successfully conducted within 24 hours of the detonation event. The aerial or vessel survey must be systematic and concentrate down-current from the structure.

(3) The NMFS observer may waive post-detonation monitoring described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section provided no marine mammals were sighted by the observer during either the required 48 hour pre-detonation monitoring period or during the pre-detonation aerial survey.

(c) During all diving operations (working dives as required in the course of the removals), divers must be instructed to scan the subsurface areas surrounding the platform (detonation) sites for bottlenose or spotted dolphins and if marine mammals are sighted to inform either the U.S. government observer or the agent of the holder of the Letter of Authorization immediately upon surfacing.

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(d)(1) A report summarizing the results of structure removal activities, mitigation measures, monitoring efforts, and other information as required by a Letter of Authorization, must be submitted to the Director, NMFS, Southeast Region, 9721 Executive Center Drive N, St. Petersburg, FL 33702 within 30 calendar days of completion of the removal of the rig.

(2) NMFS will accept the U.S. Government observer report as the activity report if all requirements for reporting contained in the Letter of Authorization are provided to that observer before the observer's report is complete.

§ 216.146 Letters of Authorization.

(a) To incidentally take bottlenose and spotted dolphins pursuant to these regulations, each company operating or which operated an oil or gas structure in the geographical area described in § 216.141, and which is responsible for abandonment or removal of the platform, must apply for and obtain a Letter of Authorization in accordance with § 216.106.

(b) A copy of the Letter of Authorization must be in the possession of the persons conducting activities that may involve incidental takings of bottlenose and spotted dolphins.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

§ 216.147 Renewal of Letters of Authorization.

(a) A Letter of Authorization issued under § 216.106 for the activity identified in § 216.141 will be renewed annually upon:

(1) Timely receipt of the reports required under § 216.145(d), which have been reviewed by the Assistant Administrator and determined to be acceptable;

(2) A determination that the maximum incidental take authorizations in § 216.141(b) will not be exceeded; and

(3) A determination that the mitigation measures required under § 216.143(b) and the Letter of Authorization have been undertaken.

(b) If a species' annual authorization is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator will review the documentation submitted with the annual reports re-

quired under § 216.145(d), to determine that the taking is not having more than a negligible impact on the species or stock involved.

(c) Notice of issuance of a renewal of the Letter of Authorization will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

§ 216.148 Modifications to Letters of Authorization.

(a) In addition to complying with the provisions of § 216.106, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no substantive modification, including withdrawal or suspension, to the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106 and subject to the provisions of this subpart shall be made until after notice and an opportunity for public comment. For purposes of this paragraph, renewal of a Letter of Authorization under § 216.147, without modification, is not considered a substantive modification.

(b) If the Assistant Administrator determines that an emergency exists that poses a significant risk to the well-being of the species or stocks of marine mammals specified in § 216.141(b), the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106, or renewed pursuant to this section may be substantively modified without prior notice and an opportunity for public comment. A notice will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER subsequent to the action.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

Subpart N—Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Underwater Detonation of Conventional Explosives by the Department of Defense

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EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 59 FR 5126, Feb. 3, 1994, subpart F to part 228 was added, effective March 3, 1994 through March 3, 1999. At 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996, subpart F of part 228 was redesignated as subpart N of part 216.