



BP's Deepwater Horizon - BP Begins "Fishing Operation" - and Open Thread

Posted by [Gail the Actuary](#) on August 22, 2010 - 10:40am

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

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Based on a [press release by BP Saturday evening](#), BP started the "fishing" operation aimed at removing the drill pipe that is within the BOP Saturday morning.

One reason for removing the drill pipe is a practical one, according to a [technical talk](#) by BP's Kent Wells on August 19:

/STAGING/local_assets/downloads_pdfs/kent_wells_technical_briefing_transcript_19_August.pdf">technical talk by BP's Kent Wells on August 19:

Reporter: I was hoping you could explain a little bit more why you need to remove the drill pipe; how it would impede the progress in moving the capping stack and the legacy BOP and putting the new one on.

Kent Wells: Yes. Another good question. So, we could have up to, I think it's around 3,500 feet of drill pipe hanging below the BOP. And, if we were to – and we believe that the drill pipe's being held by the BOP. So, if we were to try to pick up the BOP right now, we'd have to lift it 3,500 feet straight up to pull all of the drill pipe out, and then we'd have difficulty handling that, et cetera.

So, we think it's more prudent for us to go in and try to what we call fish it, actually pull the drill pipe out first and recover all of it, and then go and then take off the capping stack and then recover the BOP. So, I think that's the procedure that we believe is the most prudent way to go about it, at this point in time.

In the same technical talk, Kent Wells indicated that the fishing operation wouldn't be very easy to watch through the ROV cameras:

We'll actually be fishing inside the capping stack down into the BOP, so there wouldn't be any good ROV feed that would indicate that. But, what we will do is we'll make sure that we keep you informed through briefings or releases, et cetera, about how that process is going, so that you understand it.

Once the drill pipe is removed, the next step will be to remove the blowout preventer (BOP) in an undamaged way, so that it can be used as evidence in determining why it did not function properly at the time of the original blowout. Admiral Allen sent Bob Dudley [a letter](#), giving him

1. Submit to me, by August 22, 2010, a proposed procedure to raise and recover the BOP stack and the capping stack for my approval. Please ensure that the proposed procedure reflects concurrence from the on-site technical teams on which Transocean, Cameron, and other parties-in-interest are serving. The procedure should recognize and preserve the forensic and evidentiary value of the BOP stack, capping stack, and any other equipment or material removed or recovered, including but not limited to compliance with any Physical Evidence Collection directives issued by the Joint Investigation Team. The procedure should also include measures to enable capture and removal of oil in the event of a release during the procedure. The procedure may not be commenced without my prior approval.
2. Cooperate with the Joint Investigation Team and the Department of Justice Criminal Investigation Evidence Recovery Team (collectively, the Team) in the BOP stack and capping stack removal and recovery process. Team members will take custody of all equipment removed from or associated with the BOP stack or capping stack from the time it is removed from the well head and will maintain that custody throughout the lifting process.
3. Allow Team members unfettered access to observe and record the entire removal and recovery process, commencing with the preparation for detachment of the BOP stack or capping stack.
4. Provide a continuous live ROV feed of the removal and recovery process to Team members on-scene as well as to other Federal Government personnel on-shore - making a permanent recording of the supplied ROV feed(s). The live feed should contain sufficient redundancies to maintain continuous visual contact and should accurately capture the entire removal, replacement, and recovery process. Cooperate with the photographing and videotaping at all times throughout the entire process.

According to [BP's recent press release](#), once BP gets approval, it will proceed with an operation in which it replaces the original BOP with the BOP from the second relief well. In anticipation of a successful operation, BP has unlatched its BOP from the second relief well site.

BP's press release also indicates that BP and the federal science team are also making contingency plans, in case something goes wrong with the fishing operations.



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