

DRILL DOWN

Outer Continental Shelf National Center of Expertise

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Lessons Learned: DP Team Decision Making

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Team Decision Making

A drillship had just begun cementing a section of casing on a well. The crew decided to place itself in a DP "blue" advisory condition during the operation. This was due to the high risk involved if a loss of position were to occur. This near miss incident is a clear example that a well-crafted plan and good communication can prevent catastrophic events from occurring.

Incident

The drillship had finished setting casing earlier in the day and prepared to pump cement in the hole. The cementing operation was to start in the afternoon and lead into the night.

The Well Specific Operating Guide (WSOG) on board required the vessel crew to put themselves in a "blue" advisory condition because of the risk associated with the operation. A meeting was held on the bridge with the captain, drilling superintendent, subsea supervisor and the company man to ensure all parties were aware of the setting of "blue" in accordance with the WSOG.

Later in the evening, the weather began to deteriorate and wind started to build to 40-kt. sustained winds with 50-kt. gusts. The wind continued to build up to 55-kt. sustained and 65-kt. gusts a few minutes later. The decision was then made to have another meeting on the bridge, and vessel leadership decided to place the vessel in a DP "yellow" status and bring all generators online.

The cementing operations were halted in order to prepare for a possible disconnect. The sustained wind speed continued to build with gusts approaching 100-kt. The vessel stayed in a "yellow" status until the wind subsided several hours later.

Well Specific Operating Guidelines (WSOG)

| Condition | Action |
|-----------|---|
| Green | Continue Normal Operations |
| Advisory | Inform/Consult/Risk Assess |
| Yellow | Cease operations and Initiate Contingency Procedures to Prepare for EDS |
| Red | Halt Operations and Initiate Procedures for EDS |

Lessons Learned

- The WSOG was crafted in a way that identified the risk involved with certain critical operations in addition to environmental factors.
- The WSOG was used as a planning tool to make informed decisions.
- The crew maintained an astute awareness of the weather conditions on location.
- The crew maintained effective communications to make informed decisions.
- The crew was empowered to make a decision to shut down operations without any repercussions.