

BP Has Stopped the Oil From Flowing ... But Is It Only Temporary?

Video analysis

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Theme: [Environment](#)

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BP has succeeded in capping the well and stopping oil from flowing into the Gulf of Mexico ... at least temporarily.

The official Deepwater Horizon Response [Twitter feed](#) noted:

NO OIL FLOWING INTO THE GULF

This can be confirmed by looking at the [underwater video cams](#).

As of this writing, Skandi ROV 2's cam is showing the cap (no oil), and Skandi ROV 1's cam is showing sonar of the seafloor:

[BP live feed from Skandi ROV 1](#)

[BP live feed from Skandi ROV 2](#)

However, numerous industry experts have [warned](#) that there is no upside to temporarily capping the well as part of the well integrity test, and that it might actually cause the well to blow out.

Indeed, Don Van Nieuwenhuise - director of geosciences programs at the University of Houston - told CNN today:

We don't know if there are significant leaks deep in the well.

There's a couple of weak points at 9,000 feet, and one at 17,000 feet, that they might be particularly interested in looking and watching in the seismic.

[With seismic testing, you can look beneath the seafloor. Sonar only tests at the seafloor itself].

Admiral Thad Allen previously [said](#) that the test will be considered a success if pressure in the well stays at 8,000 psi or higher for 48 hours. So we won't know for a couple of days

whether the test has succeeded.

As AP correctly [notes](#):

Now begins a waiting period to see if the cap can hold the oil without blowing a new leak in the well. Engineers will monitor pressure readings incrementally for up to 48 hours before reopening the cap while they decide what to do.

Interestingly, as [CNN's Situation Room](#) noted a couple of minutes ago, the cap might soon be re-opened, and closed again only during hurricanes:

Admiral Thad Allen releasing a statement to us just a short while ago...

He cautions "This isn't over"...

Very interesting here. **He talks about the cap as a temporary measure to be used for hurricanes...**

"It remains **likely that we will return to the containment process...** until the relief well is completed"

So it **looks like the plan is to go back to releasing the oil** and letting it pump up to the surface.

So is the well integrity test a meaningless [PR stunt](#), which is delaying completion of the relief wells, and failing to bring us any closer to permanently killing the oil gusher?

Or is it a valuable tool to see if the well can be protected from further damage during a hurricane?

Only time will tell ...

Hat tip [FloridaOilSpillLaw](#).

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