

VIDEO: Has the Oil Well Really Been Capped?

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Everyone is saying that the well has been capped.

I hope so.

But even the government's spokesman, Thad Allen, isn't saying that it's been capped.

Here's an interchange from yesterday's press briefing:

Joel Achenbach: Yes thank you Admiral, I'm sorry if I'm a little bit confused, is there some concern that there are hydrocarbons in the annulus or is there some kind of reading or was it a model that someone examined and decided this was a concern? Can you explain that just a little bit better?...

Admiral Allen: ... We do not know the status of the annulus, OK? It, there could be nothing in it or it could be full of hydrocarbons. It could be full of hydrocarbons that are being pressured up from the reservoir, there could be hydrocarbons that are in there that have been sealed off because cement actually did that from the top kill.

Or there could be a way that because of the seals at the top of the annulus between that and the well head there could be a path for hydrocarbons to go forward. We've never known that from the, from the beginning...

Oil industry expert Bob Cavnar [notes](#): "It's pretty clear they have pressure on the wellhead when they shouldn't." Cavnar translates Allen's comments as meaning:

BP continues to have pressure on the wellhead from down below and have been letting me believe for a week that the well is static.

On August 8th, Cavnar [pointed out](#) in a must-read article that it is impossible to say whether or not the well has been capped given the available information:

The problem is that there are lots of questions that remain unanswered. Here's what I want to know:

- Is the well dead?
- What is the pressure on the well? Now?
- If the well is open to the surface, what is that pressure?

- What was the pressure during the “static kill”? Did it change at any time? What was total volume pumped?
- What was the pressure during the bullhead cement job? Did you do the “hesitation squeeze” that Kent Wells mentioned in passing? What was displacement volume?
- How do you know all the cement went down the casing?
- What was the pressure on the well after the job?
- Why is the flex joint flange leaking?
- Why are the ROV feeds no longer provided in a decipherable resolution?
- Why are some ROV feeds not being provided?
- Has the well kicked since the bullhead cement job?
- What pressure did the bullhead cement job test to?
- Have you had to pump mud into the well since the bullhead cement job? How much?
- Why are clouds of debris continuing to obscure the view several days after the well was supposedly “static”?
- Were the rams of the old BOP opened for the static kill or bullhead cement job?
- If so, could you tell if the drill pipe fish stuck in the BOP dropped into the well?
- Can you close the blind shear rams now?
- What is the damage to the rams in the old BOP?

Until these questions are answered by BP, we have no real information to tell us that the well is dead, or even safe. As long as they continue to stonewall critical data, I'll only continue to believe that the well is not “static” or safe.

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