

US sets up security zone around BP oil spill site

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Vessels work at the site of the Deepwater Horizon accident as viewed from inside a Coast Guard flight over the site in August 2010 off the shore of Louisiana. A security zone has been set up around the site of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico to safeguard any evidence of the environmental disaster earlier this year, the Justice Department said Wednesday.

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"In response to a motion by the US Department of Justice, the US District Court in New Orleans has ordered the establishment of a security zone extending 750 feet (228 meters) in all directions from the mobile [offshore drilling](#) unit Deepwater Horizon wreckage site and its debris field," the DoJ said in a statement.

The security zone, 68 kilometers (42 miles) off Louisiana state, extends from the sea floor to the [sea surface](#) and will last until October 8, 2011, "unless renewed for good cause."

The DoJ said the safety perimeter was decided "to protect the search area and any evidence located in the area against intentional or unintentional loss."

"The order will be enforced by the United States using the full range of security assets available, including vessels, aircraft or other appropriate means and equipment," it added.

The [oil](#) disaster was triggered by a blast on the Deepwater Horizon rig -- leased by BP and operated by Transocean Energy -- that killed 11 workers on April 20.

The broken well was eventually plugged but not before 4.9 million barrels of oil gushed into the Gulf. The spill, the worst of its kind in maritime history, sullied hundreds of miles of fragile coastlines and caused BP's shares to plummet in value.

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