

Norway

Operator retrieves Intercept® RBP after 3.4-year temporary suspension in the Barents Sea

Long-term V0-rated barrier supports extended well reassessment on the Norwegian Continental Shelf

CHALLENGE

- Substantial losses in openhole section
- Provide a barrier system designed to provide long-term reliability
- Risk of pressure buildup below plug and debris accumulation above plug
- Provide a retrieval approach designed to promote predictability

SOLUTION

- Deploy API 11D1 V0-qualified Intercept® RBP, which meets all operator requirements for temporary well suspension

RESULT

- Retrieved RBP on first attempt
- Avoided additional debris-removal runs
- Confirmed long-term barrier integrity
- Maintained well access after 3.4 years
- Demonstrated reliability in offshore conditions

Overview

An operator offshore in the Barents Sea on the Norwegian Continental Shelf working a dependable method to temporarily suspend a well after encountering substantial losses while drilling an openhole section. The well was part of a broader deepwater development program and, following the completion of Phase 1 in 2022, the operator initiated an extended reassessment to better understand the subsurface conditions before advancing into the next phase of operations.

This reassessment required the well to remain securely isolated for an unusually long period while still allowing for retrieval designed to help reduce operational risk of the barrier once drilling activities resumed. To achieve this, the operator selected the Intercept® retrievable bridge plug (RBP), an API 11D1 V0-rated barrier designed for temporary well suspension.

The 9 5/8-in. RBP was installed at a depth of 1,874 ft from a semisubmersible drilling rig operating in 1,224 ft of water. The plug maintained isolation performance during the period for 1,243 days, more than 3.4 years, while comprehensive evaluations were conducted. When the operator was ready to continue operations, the RBP was retrieved on the first attempt without the requirement for preparatory debris-removal runs. This validated both the operator's selection and the system's durability in demanding offshore conditions.

Challenge

After more than three years in situ, the operator had to retrieve the temporary isolation barrier to progress with subsequent planned work. Extended placement presented predictable risks; pressure could build beneath the barrier over such a long duration, and debris could accumulate above it, which would obstruct engagement of the retrieval mechanism.



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API 11D1 V0-qualified Intercept® RBP

These concerns were intensified by the operational setting—deepwater, remote, and subject to harsh offshore conditions—where additional intervention runs would significantly impact time and cost. The operator needed to minimize uncertainty and avoid nonproductive time associated with prolonged retrieval operations.

With long-term integrity, predictable behavior, and straightforward removal all critical to the project schedule, the operator required a barrier system that would support consistent performance throughout the extended suspension period and allow for efficient recovery once the well was ready to move forward.

Solution

To meet these operational demands, the operator deployed a 9 5/8-in. Intercept® RBP rated to API 11D1 V0—designed to provide robust mechanical isolation during long-term well suspension. The plug was set and pressure-tested to 4,423 psi, which indicated isolation held during pressure testing before the reassessment period began.

When retrieval operations were initiated 1,243 days later, the system's dedicated overshot played a central role in help to mitigate potential issues associated with debris or scale buildup. The overshot allowed the operator to wash down the area above the plug and circulate debris away, which cleared the path for reliable engagement with the tool.

Once latched, the operator opened the ball valve to verify conditions below the barrier and confirmed that pressure remained manageable and that the downhole environment had not degraded the plug's functionality. With these checks completed, the operator proceeded to release and retrieve the RBP as planned.

The straightforward sequence demonstrated the system's suitability for long-duration offshore suspension scenarios where simplicity, reliability, and operational predictability are paramount.



The RBP was recovered on the first attempt with no issues after being installed for 3.4 years.

Result

The operator successfully retrieved the Intercept RBP on the first attempt after 3.4 years in the wellbore, without requirement for additional runs to remove debris or recondition the top of the plug. This outcome reduced operational time and minimized exposure to retrieval-related risks.

Inspection after the RBP was pulled through the rotary showed it was found to be in good condition upon inspection, which indicated durability and consistent performance during this application. The barrier maintained full isolation integrity for the entire 1,243-day interval and supported continuous evaluation and uninterrupted planning activities.

The success of this long-term application demonstrates the operator's capability to perform extended offshore assessment with confidence and highlights the value of reliable mechanical isolation systems in deepwater environments.

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