



US President Barack Obama is set to extend a moratorium on deep-water offshore drilling for six months, the White House says.

The move comes as his administration faces criticism of its handling of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

The ban will stay in place while a commission further investigates the circumstances of the disaster.

BP says its latest effort to stem the flow of oil from the well after a rig explosion is going to plan.

Thousands of barrels of oil have been spewing into the Gulf at a depth of 1.6km (1 mile) every day since April's explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig.

New procedure

"[Mr Obama] will announce standards to strengthen oversight of the industry and enhance safety, a first step in a process that the independent Presidential Commission will continue," a White House aide was quoted as saying by Reuters.

"While the commission performs its work to determine how to prevent this from ever happening again, the moratorium on permits to drill new deep-water wells will continue for a period of six months."

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