



When two Alaska state agencies received complaints in 2005 that a BP drilling contractor routinely cheated on tests of blowout preventers and that BP knew it, the agencies let the very companies accused of wrongdoing join the investigation.

Records show that attorneys and officials of BP and its contractor, Nabors Alaska, sat in with, or even in place of, state investigators when witnesses were interviewed. In at least three instances, after witnesses confirmed allegations, company lawyers took them aside for private conversations.

One Nabors employee recanted his statement immediately after emerging from his private meeting with a Nabors attorney, state records show.

The Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission ultimately ruled there was no widespread pattern of wrongdoing and declined to levy penalties.

But a review of the investigation now, in light of the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico, raises new questions about BP's role in a probe that focused on blowout preventers, the 500,000-pound piece of equipment whose failure was critical to the catastrophe now unfolding in the Gulf.

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