

Hollis S. French



EXPERIENCE RELEVANT TO AS 31.05.009(3): “training or experience that gives the person a fundamental understanding of the oil and gas industry in the state.”

I began work in Alaska’s oil industry in 1979, when I was hired as a bullcook on Shell Platform A in Cook Inlet. I worked continuously on that platform for five years. I was promoted from bullcook to roustabout in 1980, and a year later Shell Oil Company hired me and trained me to be a production operator.

I became familiar with all aspects of offshore oil production including water injection, power generation, gas compression and oil separation and shipping. We worked closely with drilling crews when the rotary drill rig was running. We shipped pigs in the oil transport line and proved custody transfer meters. Every member of the crew was a firefighter as well.

In 1984 I was hired by ARCO Alaska Inc. as a production operator at the Kuparuk River Field on the North Slope. ARCO had an aggressive training program in place that moved operators through a half-dozen positions at roughly six month intervals. I became qualified to work every station in the plant: waterflood, oil separation and shipping, gas lift and compression, power generation, diesel production, natural gas liquids handling and waste injection. I was also assigned to Drill Sites, which entailed monitoring and testing wells, and coordinating work with wireline operations and drilling. I became versed in one of AOGCC’s primary missions by conducting witnessed tests of each well’s surface and subsurface safety valves for AOGCC field inspectors. The top job at that time for operators was to be assigned to the control room as Board Operator. I worked approximately fifty week-long shifts, at ninety hours per week, as a Board Operator.

The performance reviews I received from ARCO were all positive. Here is an example from 1991, just prior to my being promoted to Lead Operator, a position created that year to replace the company’s foremen: “Hollis exceeds expectations. Hollis’ technical expertise, maturity and leadership abilities make him uniquely qualified for advancement into supervision.”

In addition to my operator duties I was a member of the Kuparuk Fire Brigade.

In 1992 I left the oil industry to go to law school.