

561—17.15(458A) Abandonment and plugging of wells. Any well drilled in connection with oil or gas operations or metallic mineral exploration or production shall be properly plugged when the well is no longer used for the purpose for which it was drilled. In instances where no completion or recompletion reports are filed, the well(s) in question must be properly abandoned and plugged within 30 days after the permit authorizing the drilling expires.

17.15(1) Notice of intent to abandon and plug. Notice of the proposed method of abandoning and plugging any well drilled in connection with oil or gas operations or metallic mineral exploration or production must be filed on a form prescribed by the department. Approval must be obtained from the director prior to commencing operations. Time must be allowed for a department representative to be present at the plugging operations, if so desired by the director. Where the time required to file notice and obtain approval in writing would constitute an undue hardship, verbal permission to proceed may be granted, but in any case the form must be filed.

17.15(2) Method of plugging. Before any well is abandoned, it shall be plugged in a manner which will confine permanently all oil, gas, and water in the separate strata in which they occur. This operation shall be accomplished by the use of mud-laden fluid, cement, and plugs, used singly or in combination as may be approved by the director. In the event that no log or an unsatisfactory log of the well is supplied, the well shall be completely plugged with cement from bottom to top. Casing shall be cut off below plow depth. Seismic, core, or other exploratory holes drilled to or below strata containing fresh water shall be plugged and abandoned in accordance with the applicable provisions recited above.

17.15(3) Extension of time to plug well. Upon written application to defer the abandonment and plugging of any unplugged well, the department may grant an extension for a reasonable period of time when good cause therefor is shown and providing all of the casing is left in the well and is in sound condition. The bond covering such well shall remain in full force and effect until the well is plugged and the other requirements of final abandonment have been completed.

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