567—39.6(455B) Abandoned well plugging procedures.

39.6(1) *Freedom from obstructions.* Abandoned wells must be checked before they are plugged in order to ensure there are no obstructions that may interfere with plugging operations. Drop pipes, check valves, pumps, and other obstructions shall be removed if practical.

39.6(2) *Removal of casing and housing for all wells.* Casing pipe and any curbing, frost pit, or pump house structure shall be removed to a depth of four feet below the ground surface. The remaining depth shall be sealed, as specified based on well type, backfilled with soil, and graded so that surface water is directed away from the abandoned well location.

39.6(3) *Class 1 wells.*

a. Class 1 wells may be plugged by pouring filling and sealing materials from the top of the well or by using tremie pipes or dump bailers. Sand cement grout or concrete placed below the static water level shall be placed by tremie pipe or dump bailer.

b. Filling materials shall be placed up to one foot below the static water level. A minimum of one foot of sealing materials shall be placed on top of the filling material up to the static water level as a seal. Filling material may then be added up to four feet below the ground surface.

c. A minimum of one foot of sealing materials shall be placed where the casing, curbing, frost pit, or pump house structure is removed. The sealing materials shall extend six or more inches beyond the outside diameter of the top of the remaining well casing and shall terminate three feet below the ground surface. The remaining three feet (below the ground surface) shall then be backfilled with soil and graded so that surface water is directed away from the abandoned well location.

39.6(4) *Class 2 wells other than bedrock wells.*

a. If the details of well construction are unknown or obstructions that may interfere with well plugging cannot be removed, the well shall be tremied full of neat cement or bentonite grout up to four feet below the ground surface. If bentonite grout is used from the static water level to the top of the well, it should be capped by neat cement, sand cement grout, or concrete terminating four feet below the ground surface.

b. Filling material shall be placed in the bottom of the well up to four feet below the static water level. Sealing materials consisting of any bentonite products or neat cement shall be added above the filling material up to four feet below ground surface. If bentonite grout or neat cement is used, it shall be placed by tremie pipe. Concrete and sand cement grout are permissible starting at the static water level.

39.6(5) *Class 2 bedrock wells.* If the details of well construction are unknown or obstructions that may interfere with well plugging cannot be removed, the well shall be tremied full of neat cement or bentonite grout up to four feet below the ground surface. If bentonite grout is used from the static water level to the top of the well, it should be capped by neat cement, sand cement grout, or concrete terminating four feet below the ground surface.

a. Bedrock wells completed in a single confined aquifer.

(1) Before the well is plugged, a bridge plug or packer shall be placed at or below the bottom of the casing to stop the flow of water where the pressure in the confined aquifer causes the water to flow from the well to the surface. In such cases, filling materials shall be placed in the lower portion of the well before the bridge plug or packer is set.

(2) Filling material shall be placed from the bottom of the well up to ten feet below the bottom of the casing or uncased confining layer, whichever is lower. Sealing materials consisting of any bentonite products, sand cement grout, or neat cement shall be placed from either the top of the filling material to at least ten feet above the bottom of the casing or uncased confining layer or to the static water level, whichever is higher.

1. If bentonite grout, neat cement, or sand cement grout is used, it shall be placed by tremie pipe. The casing shall then be filled up to four feet below the ground surface with sealing materials.

2. If bentonite grout is used from the static water level to the top of the well, it should be capped by neat cement, sand cement grout, or concrete terminating four feet below the ground surface.

(3) It is preferable to omit filling materials and use approved sealing materials to fill the entire well up to four feet below the ground surface.

b. Bedrock wells completed in a single unconfined aquifer. The plugging procedure for these wells is the same as for bedrock wells completed in a single confined aquifer, except that a bridge plug or packer is not required to stop the flow of water since this problem will not exist in this type of well.

c. Bedrock wells completed in multiple aquifers.

(1) For the lowest aquifer, filling material shall be placed from either the bottom of the well up to ten feet below the bottom of the casing or uncased confining layer, whichever is lower. Neat cement tremied in place shall then be placed as a sealing material on top of the fill and extend upward at least 20 feet. Sealing materials shall then be placed in at least the top ten feet of each subsequent aquifer and extend at least ten feet into either the confining layer or casing above, whichever is higher. The same type of filling materials and sealing procedures shall apply for each subsequent aquifer.

(2) Filling material may be placed from the top of the uppermost aquifer seal up to the static water level of the well. The casing shall then be filled with sealing materials to four feet below the ground surface. If bentonite grout is used from the static water level to the top of the well, it should be capped by neat cement, sand cement grout, or concrete terminating four feet below the ground surface.

(3) It is preferable to omit filling materials and use approved sealing materials to fill the entire well up to four feet below the ground surface. Sand cement grout or concrete shall be applied with a tremie pipe or dump bailer when applied below the static water level.

39.6(6) *Class 3 wells.* The preferred method of plugging a sandpoint well is to pull the casing and sandpoint out of the ground, allowing the hole to collapse and fill. If the sandpoint and casing cannot be extracted, they shall be tremied full of neat cement or completely sealed with bentonite products.

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