

City Specification

No. 422

Reference to Huntington Beach Oil Code Section
15.32.090

Huntington Beach Fire Department

Oil Well Abandonment Permit Process

Before any oil well abandonment operations are commenced, the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) must be contacted. The well operator must submit an application to abandon or re-abandon **each** oil well to the CalGEM when the well is not abandoned to the current CalGEM standards, or when the well casing will be modified. The CalGEM will then issue a permit that sets forth their agency requirements and conditions.

The CalGEM abandonment permit shall be presented to the Huntington Beach Fire Department (HBFD) in order to obtain a Fire Department permit for well abandonment. The HBFD permit authority on well abandonment includes top plate inspection, methane leak test, backfill / grading and land use / development as per Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 in this City Specification.

REQUIREMENTS

1. PERMITS

- 1.1 The well operator or well abandonment contractor shall submit applicable documents and plans electronically to the HB Accela Citizen's Access portal for **each** oil well being abandoned. Site plans shall be provided to show the following features: building locations, well location, Geographical Information System (GIS) coordinates for the well(s), American Petroleum Institute (API) number(s), well name(s), well operator, property owner and any other pertinent information.
- 1.2 If explosives are to be used at any stage of the abandonment process, the abandonment contractor shall obtain an Operational Permit from the HBFD.

Once plan approvals and permits have been obtained as required by Sections 1.1 and 1.2 above, abandonment work may commence.

2. OIL WELL (DOWN HOLE) ABANDONMENT

- 2.1 An oil well shall be abandoned per the current CalGEM standards. The well operator must do everything reasonable and feasible to properly abandon the well, including completing the abandonment of the well in compliance with an alternative abandonment plan coordinated and approved by the CalGEM.
- 2.2 When the required down hole well work is complete and all records received, CalGEM will issue a Report of Well Abandonment (Form OG159) to the applicant. A copy of the

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CalGEM issued report for **each** well shall be submitted to the HBFD prior to the oil well abandonment permit final inspection approval.

3. PRIOR TO BACKFILLING THE EXCAVATION**3.1 Welding of the Metal Top Plate**

- 3.1.1 The metal top plate shall be the same thickness or thicker than the casing it is attached to and must be welded by a licensed welder.
- 3.1.2 The plate shall have three, 2 inch welds and shall be free of any nipples and/or valves. Full circumference (100%) welding of the top plate is not permitted.
- 3.1.3 Termination of the top plate and metal casing shall be a minimum of 6 feet and a maximum of 10 feet below final grade.
- 3.1.4 The following information shall be placed on the top plate surface with welding rod:
 - API number
 - Well name
 - Date welded

3.2 Fire Department Inspection and Gas-Test

- 3.2.1 The Fire Department will observe the methane gas-test at the well head prior to welding the top plate. The top plate shall be welded immediately after gas-test completion in the presence of the HBFD Inspector.
- 3.2.2 The gas-test equipment shall be calibrated within the previous 12 months and a copy of the calibration test provided at the inspection.
- 3.2.3 Results of the gas-test shall be provided to the HBFD for review prior to final permit approval.
- 3.2.4 Methane levels at the top plate shall not exceed site specific background levels.
- 3.2.5 Inspections shall be scheduled at least two business days in advance by calling the HBFD at (714) 536-5411 or by submitting an inspection request through the HB Accela Citizen's Access portal

4. BACKFILL & GRADING

- 4.1 All grading associated with well abandonment shall be performed in accordance with City grading and excavation codes.
- 4.2 Each excavation shall be back-filled and compacted in lifts no greater than 8 inches.

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- 4.3 Back-fill material shall be clean and free of debris, in compliance with *City Specification No. 431-92, Soil Quality Standard*.
- 4.4 All lifts shall be compacted to a minimum of 90 percent relative compaction, in compliance with American Society of Testing & Materials standards.
- 4.5 Copies of compaction reports shall be submitted to the HBFD at completion of grading, prior to oil well abandonment permit final inspection approval.

5. LAND USE / DEVELOPMENT

To develop on any parcel that contains an oil well, all oil wells shall be abandoned or re-abandoned to the current CalGEM standard. Sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 provide options for development based on the abandonment status.

- 5.1 If the oil well abandonment is **approved** to current standards by the CalGEM, there is no restriction to development location. A copy of the Report on Well Abandonment (OG159) shall be provided to the HBFD for review prior to precise grade or building plan approval.
- 5.2 If the oil well abandonment is attempted, but **not approved** to current standards by the CalGEM, Land Use / Development may still occur over the well, subject to the following requirements and approval by the HBFD:
 - 5.2.1 The well operator shall provide a copy of the Report on Well Abandonment (OG159) to the HBFD.
 - 5.2.2 The property owner shall provide a report from a California licensed Professional Engineer or Geologist that is experienced in well abandonment. The licensed Professional must be approved by the HBFD. The report shall include the following:
 - 5.2.2.1 Detailed abandonment procedure.
 - 5.2.2.2 Reason for failure to meet the CalGEM standards.
 - 5.2.2.3 Additional mitigation measures, if proposed.
 - 5.2.3.4 Recommendation as to safe proximity of buildings on the property to the oil well. Recommendation shall also include an affirmative statement that the abandoned well will not pose any significant risks to public health or safety.
 - 5.2.3.5 The report shall be stamped, wet signed and dated by the licensed professional.

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- 5.2.3 The property owner shall fully execute and record an Environmental Release and Indemnity Agreement in the format required by the City of Huntington Beach Attorney.
- 5.2.4 Upon receipt of the reports required in 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, and receipt of the Indemnity Agreement required in 5.2.3, the HBFD will conduct a review. If the HBFD finds the well abandonment safe for the proposed land use / development, a letter will be issued with the requirements for approval of precise grade and building plans. The HBFD shall retain the services of a third party consultant of the City's choice to assist in reviewing the report / documents, and the owner shall pay all fees for the consultant.
- 5.3 Previously abandoned well(s) are not required to be re-abandoned to the current CalGEM standard, should they be located in such that they allow for "unobstructed access" from any existing or proposed structure. Unobstructed access shall be defined in Diagram 1 of this specification.
- 5.4 Prior to the issuance of precise grade or building permits, former oilfield properties shall conform to *City Specification No. 429, Methane Mitigation Requirements*, and *City Specification No.431-92, Soil Quality Standard*.

6. CONTAMINATION

- 6.1 If, during any of the oil well abandonment or project development processes, any previously unknown oil well or soil contamination is discovered, the CalGEM and the HBFD must be notified immediately.
- 6.2 If the contamination discovered constitutes a release under Proposition 65, contact the Orange County Health Care Agency immediately and provide notification of the release.

APPROVED: _____


Scott M. Haberle, Fire Chief

DATE: _____

9.6.22

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DIAGRAM 1

UNOBSTRUCTED ACCESS FOR FUTURE ABANDONMENT

REQUIREMENTS

Unobstructed access to oil wells shall be defined when two adjacent sides are free of structures or property lines for no less than ten feet, with the third side free for no less than 50 feet to allow room for equipment required for re-abandonment operations. The fourth side should remain open to the well for vehicle and/or rig access to the well (see figure below)

