

Huntington Beach Fire Department

Oil Well Abandonment Permit Process

Before any oil well abandonment operations are commenced, the State of California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) must be contacted, and the following processes initiated:

- For all sites undergoing development, the owner must complete and submit a Well Review Program Introduction and Application to the DOGGR. At completion of the DOGGR review, a Well Review Letter will be issued to the owner.
- The well operator must submit an application to abandon or re-abandon **each** oil well to the DOGGR when the well is not abandoned to the current DOGGR standards, or when the well casing will be modified. The DOGGR will then issue a permit that sets forth their agency requirements and conditions.

The DOGGR Well Review Letter (if applicable) and abandonment permit must 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 must submit a Fire Construction Permit Application (FD042) to the HBFD for **each** oil well being abandoned. Two (2) copies of a site plan must also be provided, with building locations, well location, Geographical Information System (GIS) coordinates for well, American Petroleum Institute (API) number, well name, 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 must obtain an Operational Permit by completing the Fire Code Permit Application (FD114) and submitting to the HBFD prior to use of explosives.

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

Oil Well Abandonment Permit Process**2. OIL WELL (DOWN HOLE) ABANDONMENT**

- 2.1 An oil well shall be abandoned per the current DOGGR 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 DOGGR.
- 2.2 When the required down hole well work is complete and all records received, the DOGGR will issue a Report of Well Abandonment (Form OG159) to the applicant. A copy of the DOGGR 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 must 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 is required to have been 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 must be provided to the HBFD for review prior to final permit approval.
- 3.2.4 Methane levels at the top plate cannot exceed site specific background levels.

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3.2.5 Inspections must be scheduled at least 2 business days in advance by calling the HBFD at (714) 536-5411.

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 must be back-filled and compacted in lifts no greater than 8 inches.
- 4.3 Back-fill material must 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

- 5.0 To develop a parcel that contains an oil well, all oil wells must be abandoned or re-abandoned when the wells are not abandoned to the current DOGGR standard. Sections 5.1 and 5.2 provide options for development based on the abandonment outcome.
- 5.1 If the oil well abandonment is **approved** to current standards by the DOGGR, there is no restriction to development location. A copy of the Report on Well Abandonment (OG159) must be provided to the HBFD for review prior to precise grade or building plan approval.
- 5.2 If the oil well abandonment is **not approved** to current standards by the DOGGR, Land Use / Development may still occur, subject to the following requirements and approval by the HBFD:
 - 5.2.1 The well operator must 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 DOGGR standards.
 - 5.2.2.3 Additional mitigation measures, if proposed.

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- 5.2.3.4 Recommendation as to safe proximity of buildings on the property to the oil well. Recommendation must 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.
- 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 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 DOGGR 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: _____


David A. Segura, Fire Chief

DATE: _____

6/29/17