

This is an amendment to 19.15.4 NMAC, Section 202, effective 6/16/08.

**19.15.4.202 PLUGGING AND PERMANENT ABANDONMENT:**

A. Notice of plugging.

(1) ~~[Notice of intention to plug must be filed with the division on form C-103, Sundry Notices and Reports on Wells, by the operator prior to the commencement of plugging operations, which must provide all of the information required by Rule 1103 including operator and well identification and proposed procedures for plugging said well, and in addition the operator shall provide a well bore diagram showing the proposed plugging procedure. Twenty four hours written notice shall be given prior to commencing any plugging operations. In the case of a newly drilled dry hole, the operator may obtain verbal approval from the appropriate district supervisor or his representative of the method of plugging and time operations are to begin. Written notice in accordance with this rule shall be filed with the division ten (10) days after such verbal approval has been given.] The operator shall file notice of intention to plug with the division on form C-103 prior to commencing plugging operations. The notice shall provide all the information 19.15.13.1103 NMAC requires including operator and well identification and proposed procedures for plugging the well.~~

(2) In addition, the operator shall provide a well-bore diagram showing the proposed plugging procedure.

(3) The operator shall notify the division 24 hours prior to commencing plugging operations. In the case of a newly drilled dry hole, the operator may obtain verbal approval from the appropriate district supervisor or the district supervisor's representative of the plugging method and time operations are to begin. The operator shall file written notice in accordance with Subsection C of 19.15.4.202 NMAC with the division 10 days after the district supervisor has given verbal approval.

B. Plugging.

(1) ~~[Before any well is abandoned, it shall be plugged in a manner which will permanently confine all oil, gas and water in the separate strata in which they are originally found. This may be accomplished by using mud-laden fluid, cement and plugs singly or in combination as approved by the division on the notice of intention to plug.] Before an operator abandons a well, the operator shall plug the well in a manner that permanently confines all oil, gas and water in the separate strata in which they are originally found. The operator may accomplish this by using mud-laden fluid, cement and plugs singly or in combination as approved by the division on the notice of intention to plug.~~

(2) [The operator shall mark the exact location of plugged and abandoned wells with a steel marker not less than four inches in diameter set in cement and extending at least four feet (4') above mean ground level. The operator name, lease name and well number and location, including unit letter, section, township and range, shall be welded, stamped or otherwise permanently engraved into the metal of the marker. No permanent structures preventing access to the wellhead shall be built over a plugged and abandoned well without written approval of the OCD. No plugged and abandonment marker shall be removed without the written permission of the OCD.] The operator shall mark the exact location of plugged and abandoned wells with a steel marker not less than four inches in diameter set in cement and extending at least four feet above mean ground level. The operator name, lease name and well number and location, including unit letter, section, township and range, shall be welded, stamped or otherwise permanently engraved into the marker's metal. A person shall not build permanent structures preventing access to the wellhead over a plugged and abandoned well without the division's written approval. A person shall not remove a plugged and abandonment marker without the division's written permission.

(3) The operator may use below-ground plugged and abandonment markers only with the division's written permission when an above-ground marker would interfere with agricultural endeavors. The below-ground marker shall have a steel plate welded onto the abandoned well's surface or conductor pipe and shall be at least three feet below the ground surface and of sufficient size so that all the information 19.15.3.103 NMAC requires can be stenciled into the steel or welded onto the steel plate's surface. The division may require a re-survey of the well location.

~~[(3)]~~ (4) As soon as practical but no later than one year after, the completion of plugging operations, the operator shall:

~~[(a) fill all pits;]~~

~~[(b)]~~ (a) level the location;

~~[(c)]~~ (b) remove deadmen and all other junk; and

~~[(d)]~~ (c) take such other measures as are necessary or required by the division to restore the location to a safe and clean condition.

(5) The operator shall close all pits or below-grade tanks pursuant to 19.15.17 NMAC.

~~[(4)]~~ (6) Upon completion of plugging and clean up restoration operations as required, the operator shall contact the appropriate district office to arrange for an inspection of the well and location.

~~[(5) Below ground plugged and abandonment markers can be used only with written permission of the OCD when an above ground marker would interfere with agricultural endeavors. The below ground marker shall have a steel plate welded onto the surface or conductor pipe of the abandoned well and shall be at least 3 feet below the ground surface and of sufficient size so that all the information required by Section 103 of 19.15.3 NMAC can be stenciled into the steel or welded onto the surface of the steel plate. The OCD may require a re-survey of the well location.]~~

C. Reports.

(1) The operator shall file form C-105, well completion or recompletion report and log as provided in ~~[Rule 1105]~~ 19.15.13.1105 NMAC.

(2) Within ~~[thirty (30)]~~ 30 days after completing ~~[all]~~ the required restoration work, the operator shall file with the division, in triplicate, a record of the work done on form C-103 as provided in ~~[Rule 1103]~~ 19.15.13.1103 NMAC.

(3) The division shall not approve the record of plugging or release any bonds until the operator has filed all necessary reports [have been file] and the division has inspected and approved the location [has been inspected and approved by the division].

[1-1-50, 7-12-90...2-1-96; A, 3-31-00; 19.15.4.202 NMAC - Rn, 19 NMAC 15.D.202, 12-14-01; A, 6/16/08]