

Environmental Protection Agency

§ 147.2905

removal of underlying supporting material by mining or solution solids, either artificially or from natural causes; compaction due to wetting (hydrocompaction); oxidation of organic matter in soils; or added load on the land surface.

Underground source of drinking water—an aquifer or its portion:

(a)(1) Which supplies any public water system; or

(2) Which contains a sufficient quantity of ground water to supply a public water system; and

(i) Currently supplies drinking water for human consumption; or

(ii) Contains fewer than 10,000 mg/l total dissolved solids; and

(b) Which is not an exempted aquifer.

USDW—underground source of drinking water.

Well—a bored, drilled, or driven shaft, or a dug hole whose depth is greater than the largest surface dimension.

Well injection—the subsurface emplacement of fluids through a bored, drilled, or driven well; or through a dug well, where the depth of the dug well is greater than the largest surface dimension.

Well workover—any reentry of an injection well; including, but not limited to, the pulling of tubular goods, cementing or casing repairs; and excluding any routine maintenance (e.g. re-seating the packer at the same depth, or repairs to surface equipment).

§ 147.2903 Prohibition of unauthorized injection.

(a) Any underground injection, except as authorized by permit or rule issued under the UIC program, is prohibited. The construction or operation of any well required to have a permit is prohibited until the permit has been issued.

(b) No owner or operator shall construct, operate, maintain, convert, plug, or abandon any injection well, or conduct any other injection activity, in a manner that allows the movement of fluid containing any contaminant into underground sources of drinking water, if the presence of that contaminant may cause the violation of any primary drinking water regulation under 40 CFR part 142 or may otherwise adversely affect the health of persons.

The applicant for a permit shall have the burden of showing that the requirements of this paragraph are met.

(c) Injection between the outermost casing protecting underground sources of drinking water and the well bore is prohibited.

§ 147.2904 Area of review.

(a) The area of review for an injection well or project will be a fixed radius of one-fourth of a mile from the well, field or project.

(b) The zone of endangering influence is the lateral area around the injection well or project in which the injection zone pressures may cause movement of fluid into an underground source of drinking water (USDW) if there are improperly sealed, completed or abandoned wells present. A zone of endangering influence may be determined by EPA through the use of an appropriate formula that addresses the relevant geologic, hydrologic, engineering and operational features of the well, field, or project.

§ 147.2905 Plugging and abandonment.

The owner/operator shall notify the Osage UIC office within 30 days of the date injection has terminated. The well must be plugged within 1 year after termination of injection. The Regional Administrator may extend the time to plug, but only if no fluid movement into a USDW will occur, and the operator has presented a viable plan for utilizing the well within a reasonable time.

(a) Until an injection well has been properly plugged and abandoned, annual reports to the Regional Administrator on well status, and mechanical integrity tests as outlined in §§ 147.2912 and 147.2920 will be required, whether or not injection has ceased.

(b) All wells shall be plugged to prevent movement of fluid into an USDW.

(c) The owner/operator shall notify the Osage UIC office by certified mail at least 5 days prior to the commencement of plugging operations. The Osage UIC office may waive or reduce the 5-day notice requirement when a qualified EPA representative is available to witness the plugging operation. The following information must be submitted as part of the notification:

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(1) Type and number of plugs to be used;

(2) Elevation of top and bottom of each plug;

(3) Method of plug placement; and

(4) Type, grade and quantity of cement to be used.

(d) The well shall be kept full of mud as casing is removed. No surface casing shall be removed without written approval from the Regional Administrator.

(e)(1) If surface casing is adequately set and cemented through all freshwater zones (set to at least 50 feet below the base of freshwater), a plug shall be set at least 50 feet below the shoe of the casing and extending at least 50 feet above the shoe of the casing, or

(2) If the surface casing and cementing is inadequate, the well bore shall be filled with cement from a point 50 feet below the base of fresh water to a point 50 feet above the shoe of the surface casing, and any additional plugs as required by the Osage UIC office and/or the Osage Agency.

(3) In all cases, the top 20 feet of the well bore below 3 feet of ground surface shall be filled with cement. Surface casing shall be cut off 3 feet below ground surface and covered with a secure steel cap on top of the surface pipe. The remaining 3 feet shall be filled with dirt.

(f)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (f)(2) of this section, each producing or receiving formation shall be sealed off with a 50-foot cement plug placed at the base of the formation and a 50-foot cement plug placed at the top of the formation.

(2) The requirement in paragraph (f)(1) of this section does not apply if the producing/receiving formation is already sealed off from the well bore with adequate casing and cementing behind casing, and casing is not to be removed, or the only openings from the producing/receiving formation into the well bore are perforations in the casing, and the annulus between the casing and the outer walls of the well is filled with cement for a distance of 50 feet below the base of the formation and 50 feet above the top of the formation. When such conditions exist, a bridge plug capped with 10 feet of ce-

ment set at the top of the producing formation may be used.

(g) When specified by the Osage UIC office, any uncased hole below the shoe of any casing to be left in the well shall be filled with cement to a depth of at least 50 feet below the casing shoe, or the bottom of the hole, and the casing above the shoe shall be filled with cement to at least 50 feet above the shoe of the casing. If the well has a screen or liner which is not to be removed, the well bore shall be filled with cement from the base of the screen or liner to at least 50 feet above the top of the screen or liner.

(h) All intervals between cement plugs in the well bore shall be filled with mud.

(i) A report containing copies of the cementing tickets shall be submitted to BIA within 10 days of plugging completion.

(j) A surety bond must be on file with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and shall not be released until the well has been properly plugged and the Regional Administrator has agreed to the release of the bond.

§ 147.2906 **Emergency permits.**

(a) An emergency permit may be issued if:

(1) There will be an imminent health hazard unless an emergency permit is issued; or

(2) There will be a substantial and irretrievable loss of oil and gas resources, timely application for a permit could not practicably have been made, and injection will not result in movement of fluid into an USDW; or

(3) There will be a substantial delay in oil or gas production, and injection will not result in movement of fluid into an USDW.

(b) *Requirements*—(1) *Permit duration.*

(i) Emergency permits issued to avoid an imminent health threat may last no longer than the time necessary to prevent the hazard.

(ii) Emergency permits issued to prevent a substantial and irretrievable loss of oil or gas resources shall be for no longer than 90 days, unless a complete permit application has been submitted during that time; in which case the emergency permit may be extended