

Underground Injection Control Program: General Provisions

40 C.F.R. § 146.8—Mechanical Integrity

(a) An injection well has mechanical integrity if:

(1) There is no significant leak in the casing, tubing or packer; and

(2) There is no significant fluid movement into an underground source of drinking water through vertical channels adjacent to the injection well bore.

(b) One of the following methods must be used to evaluate the absence of significant leaks under paragraph (a) (1) of this section:

(1) Following an initial pressure test, monitoring of the tubing-casing annulus pressure with sufficient frequency to be representative, as determined by the Director, while maintaining an annulus pressure different from atmospheric pressure measured at the surface;

(2) Pressure test with liquid or gas; or

(3) Records of monitoring showing the absence of significant changes in the relationship between injection pressure and injection flow rate for the following Class II enhanced recovery wells:

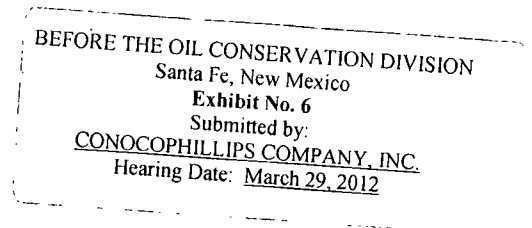
(i) Existing wells completed without a packer provided that a pressure test has been performed and the data is available and provided further that one pressure test shall be performed at a time when the well is shut down and if the running of such a test will not cause further loss of significant amounts of oil or gas; or

(ii) Existing wells constructed without a long string casing, but with surface casing which terminates at the base of fresh water provided that local geological and hydrological features allow such construction and provided further that the annular space shall be visually inspected. For these wells, the Director shall prescribe a monitoring program which will verify the absence of significant fluid movement from the injection zone into an USDW.

(c) One of the following methods must be used to determine the absence of significant fluid movement under paragraph (a)(2) of this section:

(1) The results of a temperature or noise log; or

(2) For Class II only, cementing records demonstrating the presence of adequate cement to prevent such migration; or



(3) For Class III wells where the nature of the casing precludes the use of the logging techniques prescribed at paragraph (c) (1) of this section, cementing records demonstrating the presence of adequate cement to prevent such migration;

(4) For Class III wells where the Director elects to rely on cementing records to demonstrate the absence of significant fluid movement, the monitoring program prescribed by § 146.33(b) shall be designed to verify the absence of significant fluid movement.

(d) The Director may allow the use of a test to demonstrate mechanical integrity other than those listed in paragraphs (b) and (c)(2) of this section with the written approval of the Administrator. To obtain approval, the Director shall submit a written request to the Administrator, which shall set forth the proposed test and all technical data supporting its use. The Administrator shall approve the request if it will reliably demonstrate the mechanical integrity of wells for which its use is proposed. Any alternate method approved by the Administrator shall be published in the Federal Register and may be used in all States unless its use is restricted at the time of approval by the Administrator.

(e) In conducting and evaluating the tests enumerated in this section or others to be allowed by the Director, the owner or operator and the Director shall apply methods and standards generally accepted in the industry. When the owner or operator reports the results of mechanical integrity tests to the Director, he shall include a description of the test(s) and the method(s) used. In making his/her evaluation, the Director shall review monitoring and other test data submitted since the previous evaluation.

(f) The Director may require additional or alternative tests if the results presented by the owner or operator under § 146.8(e) are not satisfactory to the Director to demonstrate that there is no movement of fluid into or between USDWs resulting from the injection activity.

Underground Injection Control Program: Class II Wells

40 C.F.R. § 146.22—Construction Requirements

(a) All new Class II wells shall be sited in such a fashion that they inject into a formation which is separated from any USDW by a confining zone that is free of known open faults or fractures within the area of review.

(b)(1) All Class II injection wells shall be cased and cemented to prevent movement of fluids into or between underground sources of drinking water. The casing and cement used in the construction of each newly drilled well shall be designed for the life expectancy of the well. In determining and specifying casing and cementing requirements, the following factors shall be considered:

- (i) Depth to the injection zone;
- (ii) Depth to the bottom of all USDWs; and
- (iii) Estimated maximum and average injection pressures;

(2) In addition the Director may consider information on:

- (i) Nature of formation fluids;
- (ii) Lithology of injection and confining zones;
- (iii) External pressure, internal pressure, and axial loading;
- (iv) Hole size;
- (v) Size and grade of all casing strings; and
- (vi) Class of cement.

(c) The requirements in paragraph (b) of this section need not apply to existing or newly converted Class II wells located in existing fields if:

- (1) Regulatory controls for casing and cementing existed for those wells at the time of drilling and those wells are in compliance with those controls; and
- (2) Well injection will not result in the movement of fluids into an underground source of drinking water so as to create a significant risk to the health of persons.

(d) The requirements in paragraph (b) of this section need not apply to newly drilled wells in existing fields if:

(1) They meet the requirements of the State for casing and cementing applicable to that field at the time of submission of the State program to the Administrator; and

(2) Well injection will not result in the movement of fluids into an underground source of drinking water so as to create a significant risk to the health of persons.

(e) Where a State did not have regulatory controls for casing and cementing prior to the time of the submission of the State program to the Administrator, the Director need not apply the casing and cementing requirements in paragraph (b) of this section if he submits as a part of his application for primacy, an appropriate plan for casing and cementing of existing, newly converted, and newly drilled wells in existing fields, and the Administrator approves the plan.

(f) Appropriate logs and other tests shall be conducted during the drilling and construction of new Class II wells. A descriptive report interpreting the results of that portion of those logs and tests which specifically relate to (1) an USDW and the confining zone adjacent to it, and (2) the injection and adjacent formations shall be prepared by a knowledgeable log analyst and submitted to the director. At a minimum, these logs and tests shall include:

(1) Deviation checks on all holes constructed by first drilling a pilot hole and then enlarging the pilot hole, by reaming or another method. Such checks shall be at sufficiently frequent intervals to assure that vertical avenues for fluid movement in the form of diverging holes are not created during drilling.

(2) Such other logs and tests as may be needed after taking into account the availability of similar data in the area of the drilling site, the construction plan, and the need for additional information that may arise from time to time as the construction of the well progresses. In determining which logs and tests shall be required the following shall be considered by the Director in setting logging and testing requirements:

(i) For surface casing intended to protect underground sources of drinking water in areas where the lithology has not been determined:

(A) Electric and caliper logs before casing is installed; and

(B) A cement bond, temperature, or density log after the casing is set and cemented.

(ii) For intermediate and long strings of casing intended to facilitate injection:

(A) Electric, porosity and gamma ray logs before the casing is installed;

(B) Fracture finder logs; and

(C) A cement bond, temperature, or density log after the casing is set and cemented.

(g) At a minimum, the following information concerning the injection formation shall be determined or calculated for new Class II wells or projects:

- (1) Fluid pressure;
- (2) Estimated fracture pressure;
- (3) Physical and chemical characteristics of the injection zone.