

Bruce Bantner's  
Comments

DISCUSSION DRAFT, 3-14-02 04-15-02

RULE: 19.15. \_\_\_\_\_ Hydrogen Sulfide Gas (Hydrogen Sulfide)

**OUTLINE:**

- A. In General.
- B. Applicability
- C. Definitions
  - 1. ANSI
  - 2. API
  - 3. ASTM
  - 4. Dispersion Technique
  - 5. Escape Rate
  - 6. GPA
  - 7. LEPC
  - 8. NACE
  - 9. PPM
  - 10. Potentially Hazardous Volume
  - 11. Public Area
  - 12. Public Road
  - 13. Radius of Exposure
- D. Determination of Hydrogen Sulfide Risk
  - 1. Determination of Hydrogen Sulfide Concentration
  - 2. Tested Concentrations Below 100 ppm
  - 3. Tested Concentrations Above 100 ppm; Calculation of the Radius of Exposure
  - 4. Recalculation
- E. H<sub>2</sub>S Contingency Plan
  - 1. In General
  - 2. When Required
  - 3. Input From Emergency Response Authorities and the Division
  - 4. Elements
  - 5. Submission
  - 6. Failure to Submit Plan
  - 7. Annual Review, Amendment
  - 8. Retention and On-Site Inspection
  - 9. Activation Levels
- F. Protection from Hydrogen Sulfide During Drilling, Workover and Servicing Operations.
  - 1. API Standards
  - 2. Minimum Standards
  - 3. Operating Practices In Hydrogen Sulfide Concentrations of 100 ppm or Greater
- G. Protection from Hydrogen Sulfide at Producing Wells, Tank Batteries etc.
  - 1. API Standards
  - 2. Minimum Standards
  - 3. Modification or Repair
  - 4. Compliance Schedule
- H. Personnel Protection and Training
- I. Standards for Equipment That May Be Exposed to Hydrogen Sulfide
- J. Hydrogen Sulfide Injection
- K. Exemptions
- L. Release
  - 1. Activation of the H<sub>2</sub>S Contingency Plan
  - 2. Notification of the Division
- M. Additional Standards

- a. For determining the 100-ppm radius of exposure:  $X = [(1.589)(\text{hydrogen sulfide concentration})(Q)]^{(0.6258)}$ , or
- b. For determining the 500-ppm radius of exposure:  $X = [(0.4546)(\text{hydrogen sulfide concentration})(Q)]^{(0.6258)}$

Where: X= radius of exposure in feet; hydrogen sulfide concentration = decimal equivalent of the mole or volume fractions of hydrogen sulfide in the gaseous mixture; Q= maximum volume of gas determined to be available for escape in cubic feet per day (corrected for standard conditions of 14.73 psia and 60°F).

c. As an alternative for determining either the 100 ppm or the 500 ppm radius of exposures, a dispersion technique that takes into account representative wind speed, direction, atmospheric stability, complex terrain and other dispersion features may be utilized in lieu of the above Pasquill Gifford equations. Such techniques may include, but shall not be limited to, one of a series of computer models outlined in the environmental protection agency's "Guidelines on Air Quality Models (EPA-450/2-78-027R)."

d. Where multiple sources of hydrogen sulfide are present (e.g. wells, treatment equipment, flow lines, etc.), the radius of exposure may encompass a larger area than would otherwise be calculated using a radius of exposure computation for each component part.

e. For a well being drilled in an area where insufficient data exists to calculate a radius of exposure, but where hydrogen sulfide could reasonably be expected to be present in concentrations in excess of 100 ppm in the gaseous mixture, a 100 ppm radius of exposure equal to 3,000 feet shall be assumed.

#### D. Determination of Hydrogen Sulfide Risk.

##### 1. Determination of Hydrogen Sulfide Concentration.

a. Each person, operator or facility to which this Section applies shall determine the hydrogen sulfide concentration within each of its operations or systems. A representative sample for each system or operation may be used for testing provided that the person, operator or facility can demonstrate that the concentration derived from a test of the representative sample is reasonably representative of the hydrogen sulfide concentration within the operation or system.

~~b. \_\_\_\_\_~~ b. The tests referred to in the previous Subparagraph shall be conducted in accordance with applicable ASTM and GPA standards or by other methods approved by the division.

~~c. Tests conducted prior to the effective date of this Section may be utilized to satisfy this requirement, provided that the method used meets D.1.b above.~~

2. Tested Concentrations Below 100 ppm. If the testing described in the previous Paragraph determines that the hydrogen sulfide concentration in a given operation or system is less than 100 ppm, no further actions are required pursuant to this Section.

##### 3. Tested Concentrations Above 100 ppm; Calculation of the Radius of Exposure.

a. If the testing described in Paragraph 1 of this Subsection determines that the concentration of hydrogen sulfide in a gaseous mixture is 100 ppm or greater, then the person, operator or facility must calculate the radius of exposure pursuant to this Section.

b. If calculation of the radius of exposure reveals that a potentially hazardous volume is present, the person, operator or facility shall provide the results of the radius of exposure determinations to the division within 180 days of commencing operations or, for existing facilities, within 180 days of the effective date of this Section, ~~unless extended for good cause by the Director. Operators shall have the right to petition the Division for an extension of this 180-day reporting period.~~ The division may disapprove the test methodology and require additional testing if the test methodology did not conform to the requirements of this Section.

4. Recalculation. If operational or production alterations are made that, through application of generally accepted engineering principles and generally accepted operating practices, indicate that a 25% or greater increase in the hydrogen sulfide concentration may occur in a given operation or facility, the person, operator or facility shall recalculate the radius of exposure and submit the results to the division.

#### E. H<sub>2</sub>S Contingency Plan.

1. In General. The H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan is a written document that provides a plan of action that will be used to alert and protect persons at risk in the event of a potentially significant release of hydrogen sulfide gas.

2. When Required. An H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan must be prepared whenever a potentially hazardous volume of hydrogen sulfide may be present.

~~3. Input From Emergency Response Authorities and the Division.~~ The person, operator or facility shall develop the H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan in accordance with the following sections. The opportunity for input to this plan shall be offered to the Division, the NM Department of Public Safety, and/or to other appropriate authorities as needed.

[Steve said that he could work on this section to make it work]

4. Elements. The H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan shall consist of different elements depending on the risks present.

a. Elements Required for Each Plan:

i. A detailed description of each action to be taken in the event of a release of a potentially hazardous volume of hydrogen sulfide, including an immediate action plan that substantially conforms to paragraph 7.6 of guidelines published by the API in its publication entitled "Recommended Practices for Oil and Gas Producing and Gas Processing Plant Operations Involving Hydrogen Sulfide," RP-55, most recent edition;

ii. A call list including the following as applicable:

- aa. local supervisory personnel;
- bb. county sheriff;
- cc. the department of public safety and state police;
- dd. city or municipal police;
- ee. the appropriate division district office; and
- ff. other public agencies as appropriate.

iii. A plat or map detailing the area within the radius of exposure of a potentially hazardous volume; and

iv. A list of the names and telephone numbers of all personnel to be contacted when a release is reported or suspected.

b. Where the 500-ppm radius of exposure encompasses any public road, the person, operator or facility shall include the following additional elements in the H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan:

i. Instructions and procedures for alerting and coordinating with emergency response authorities in the event of a release of a potentially hazardous volume of hydrogen sulfide at any public road;

ii. A plat or map detailing the area of exposure, including the locations of public roads within the radius of exposure of a potentially hazardous volume;

iii. A plan to divert traffic and safely get existing traffic off the road and out of danger.

c. Where the 100-ppm radius of exposure encompasses any public area, the following additional elements shall be included in the H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan:

i. detailed plans of action to alert and protect persons in the event of a release of a potentially hazardous volume of hydrogen sulfide, including instructions and procedures for alerting persons at risk and emergency response authorities in the event of a release of a potentially hazardous volume of hydrogen sulfide;

ii. a call list including all the persons set forth in Sub subparagraph E(4)(a)(ii), above, and the following:

- aa. ambulance services;
- bb. hospitals;
- cc. county and city fire departments;
- dd. doctors;
- ee. contractors for supplemental or emergency equipment; and

- ff. other public agencies as appropriate.
- iii. a statement describing how emergency response actions will be coordinated with the division and the New Mexico state police, consistent with the New Mexico hazardous materials emergency response plan (HMER);
  - iv. a plat or map detailing the area of exposure, including the locations of private dwellings or residences, public facilities such as schools, businesses, public roads or other similar areas where the public may be reasonably expected to be present within the radius of exposure;
  - v. the names and telephone numbers of all persons living within the radius of exposure of 100 ppm hydrogen sulfide and contact persons for each public area, such as churches, schools and businesses;
  - vi. provisions for advance briefing of affected and responsible persons within the radius of exposure. Such advance briefing shall include the hazards and characteristics of hydrogen sulfide, the necessity for an H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan, the possible sources of hydrogen sulfide within the radius of exposure, instructions for reporting a gas leak, the manner in which persons will be notified in the event of an emergency and steps to be taken in an emergency; and
  - vii. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ ~~vii.~~ additional support information, if applicable, such as the location of emergency evacuation routes, the location of safety and life support equipment, the location of hydrogen sulfide containing facilities, the location of nearby telephones or other means of communication and special instructions for conditions at a particular installation such as local terrain and the effect of various weather conditions.
  - viii. In the event that the operator believes that the population density and occupancy make it unreasonable to prepare a call list, a reaction type of plan (e.g., siren) may be proposed in lieu of the call list and advanced public notification, if approved by the Division.

d. Additional Requirements. The division may impose additional requirements or modify requirements based on site-specific conditions, population density or special circumstances.

5. Submission. The H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan shall be submitted to the division and made available to the local emergency planning committee no later than 180 days following submission of the radius of exposure required in Subsection D of this Section. The H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan may be submitted separately or along with the application for permit to drill (APD).

6. Failure to Submit Plan. Failure to submit an H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan when required may result in denial of an application for permit to drill that well, , cancellation of an allowable for that well or the applicable lease, or other appropriate enforcement action.

7. Annual Review, Amendment. The person, operator or facility shall review the H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan on an annual basis or earlier if activation of a plan reveals a deficiency. The person, operator or facility shall submit any amendments to the division and, where applicable, to the local emergency planning committee.

8. Retention and On-Site Inspection. An H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan shall be reasonably accessible in the event of a release and maintained on file at all times and shall be available for inspection by the Division ~~during normal business hours.~~

9. Activation Levels. The H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan shall be activated in the event of a release of a potentially hazardous volume of H<sub>2</sub>S above the respective thresholds (i.e. 500 ppm radius at any public road, 100 ppm radius at any public area, etc.) or if a sustained concentration of H<sub>2</sub>S exceeds 50 ppm at the property line of any facility, well or operation.

F. Protection from Hydrogen Sulfide During Drilling, Workover and Servicing Operations.

1. API Standards. All drilling, completion, workover and well servicing operations shall be conducted with due consideration to the guidelines published by the API entitled "Recommended Practice for Oil and Gas Well Servicing and Workover Operations Involving Hydrogen Sulfide," RP-68,

and "Recommended Practices for Safe Drilling of Wells Containing Hydrogen Sulfide," RP-49, most recent edition.

2. Minimum Standards. At a minimum, and possibly in addition to the foregoing API standards, each drilling, completion, workover and well servicing operation shall also be conducted in accordance with the following:

a. Before Commencing Operations. The person, operator or facility shall complete an H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan, where required, before commencement of operations. In addition, hydrogen sulfide training shall be completed before commencement of operations.

b. Egress Routes. The person, operator or facility shall maintain a passable egress route at all times during operations.

c. ~~Detection, and Monitoring, and Safety Equipment.~~ The person, operator or facility shall provide hydrogen sulfide detection, ~~and monitoring, and safety~~ equipment as follows:

i. Each drilling and completion site shall have a hydrogen sulfide detection and monitoring system that automatically activates visible and audible alarms when the ambient air concentration of hydrogen sulfide reaches a level not to exceed 20 ppm. There shall be a sensing point located at the shale shaker, rig floor and bell nipple for a drilling site and the cellar, rig floor and circulating tanks or shale shaker for a completion site.

ii. The detection system shall be calibrated, ~~and tested, and recorded~~ monthly.

iii. For workover and well servicing operations, one operational sensing point shall be located as close to the well bore as practical. Additional sensing points may be necessary for large or long-term operations.

iv. Hydrogen sulfide detection, ~~and monitoring, and safety~~ equipment must be provided and operational during drilling when drilling is within 500 feet of the zone anticipated to contain hydrogen sulfide and continuously thereafter through all subsequent drilling. Detection and monitoring equipment is not required for drilling from the surface to within 500 feet of the zone anticipated to contain hydrogen sulfide.

d. Wind Indicators and Signs.

i. Equipment to indicate wind direction shall be present and visible at all times. At least two devices to indicate wind direction shall be installed at separate elevations and visible from all principal working areas at all times.

ii. Danger or caution signs shall be displayed along all accesses to the site. The signs shall read "DANGER - POISON GAS", "DANGER - HYDROGEN SULFIDE", or, as appropriate "CAUTION - POISON GAS" or "CAUTION - HYDROGEN SULFIDE" and in smaller lettering: "Do Not Approach If Red Flag is Flying" or equivalent language approved by the division. Each sign shall be painted in colors that satisfy Table 1 of ANSI standard Z53.1-1967 or regulations of the federal occupational safety and health administration. The signs shall be legible and large enough to be read by all persons entering the well site and shall be placed at a location which allows vehicles to turn around at a safe distance prior to reaching the site.

iii. When sustained the concentration of hydrogen sulfide is detected above 20 ppm at any detection point, red flags shall be displayed.

e. Hydrogen Sulfide Encountered During Operations. If hydrogen sulfide was not anticipated at the time the division approved the APD but is encountered during drilling in excess of 100 ppm in the gaseous mixture, the operator shall immediately ensure control of the well, suspend drilling operations unless detrimental to well control, and obtain materials and safety equipment to bring the operations into compliance with this Section. The operator shall notify the division of the event and the mitigating steps that have or are being taken as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours following discovery.

3. Operating Practices In Hydrogen Sulfide Concentrations of 100 ppm or Greater. Operating practices in areas known to contain a concentration of hydrogen sulfide gas of 100 ppm or greater in the gaseous mixture shall be subject to the following requirements:

a. **If Hydrogen Sulfide Is Encountered During Use of Air, Gas, Mist or Other Non-Mud Circulating Media.** If hydrogen sulfide gas in excess of 100 ppm is encountered while drilling with air, gas, mist or other non-mud circulating mediums for aerated mud, the well shall be killed with a water- or oil-based mud, and mud shall be used thereafter as the circulating medium for continued drilling. Alternative drilling methods may be used if approved by the division.

b. **Flare System.** For drilling and completion operations, the person, operator or facility shall install a flare system to safely gather and burn hydrogen sulfide-bearing gas, unless exempted pursuant to Subsection K. Flare outlets shall be located as far from the well bore as feasible but not less than 150 feet from the well. Flare lines shall be as straight as practical. The flare system shall be equipped with a suitable and safe means of ignition. Where noncombustible gas is to be flared, the system shall be provided supplemental fuel to maintain ignition.

c. **Remote Controlled Choke.** When the 100 ppm Radius of Exposure includes a public area, except where exempt pursuant to Subsection K, the following must be done:

i. The person, operator or facility shall install a remote controlled choke during drilling and during completion and well servicing operations when the 100-ppm H<sub>2</sub>S radius of exposure includes a public area, ~~unless exempted pursuant to Subsection K.~~

ii. ~~A remote controlled valve may be used in lieu of use of a remote controlled choke, but only for completion operations.~~ For completion or workover operations, a suitable alternative to a remote choke (e.g., remote controlled valve, BOP with remote accumulator, etc.) may be used.

iii. A remote controlled choke or remote controlled valve shall have, at a minimum, a pressure and hydrogen sulfide-rated well control choke and kill system including manifold and blowout preventer pursuant to specifications API-16C and API-RP 53. Where possible, the blowout preventer stack shall have at least one spool for the kill and choke lines, two pipe rams, one blind ram, one annular device and a rotating head. Mud-gas separators shall also be used. These systems shall be tested and maintained pursuant to the specifications referenced or other division rules, if more stringent. Variations to blowout preventer stack arrangements may be granted by the division for good cause shown.

d. **Mud Program.** A mud program, including de-gassing and flaring, capable of handling H<sub>2</sub>S conditions and well control shall be used.

e. **Well Testing.** Except with prior approval by the division, the drill-stem testing shall be conducted only during daylight hours and formation fluids shall not be permitted to flow to the surface (closed chamber only). An operator shall notify the division 24 hours in advance of a drill-stem test if an H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan is required pursuant to this Section.

**G. Protection from Hydrogen Sulfide at Crude Oil Pump Stations, Producing Wells, Tank Batteries and Associated Production Facilities, Refineries, Gas Plants and Compressor Stations.**

1. **API Standards.** Operations at crude oil pump stations and producing wells, tank batteries and associated production facilities shall be conducted with due consideration- to the guidelines published by the API in its publication entitled "Recommended Practices for Oil and Gas Producing and Gas Processing Plant Operations Involving Hydrogen Sulfide," RP-55, latest edition.

2. **Minimum Standards.** At a minimum, production from wells and operation of tank batteries and associated production equipment shall also be conducted in accordance with the following Subparagraphs and Sub subparagraphs. Where API standards referred to in the previous paragraph are less stringent than the following, the more stringent standards shall apply.

a. **Gaseous Mixtures Containing 100 ppm or more.** Producing wells containing 100 ppm or more of hydrogen sulfide in the gaseous mixture, tank batteries and associated production facilities at such sites, shall be subject to the following:

i. **H<sub>2</sub>S Contingency Plan.** If the radius of exposure calculated pursuant to Subsection D can reach the designated thresholds (i.e., 100 ppm in public areas and 500 ppm on public roads), an H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan shall be required.

ii. **Signage.** A danger sign or signs shall be posted within 50 feet of each facility to alert the public of the potential hydrogen sulfide danger. If fenced, a danger sign at the gates shall suffice. Danger signs shall be posted at each flow line and gathering line on the well pad that

contains hydrogen sulfide gas. The signs shall read "DANGER - POISON GAS", "DANGER - HYDROGEN SULFIDE", or, as appropriate "CAUTION - POISON GAS" or "CAUTION - HYDROGEN SULFIDE" or equivalent language approved by the division. Each sign shall be painted in colors that satisfy Table 1 of ANSI standard Z53.1-1967 or regulations of the federal occupational safety and health administration. The signs shall be legible and large enough to be read by all persons entering the well site. A sign shall be placed at each point where a flow line or gathering line crosses a public road. Each sign shall be legible and shall contain the name of the owner or operator and an emergency telephone number.

iii. Fencing. Fencing and gates shall be required when producing wells, associated tank batteries and associated production facilities are located within a 1/4-mile of a public area. The fence shall consist of a 5-foot chain link topped by two stands of barbed wire or other designs approved by the division. Gates shall be locked when unattended.

iv. Wind Direction Indicators. Wind direction indicators shall be required at every facility (tank battery, water injection station, production satellite) where H<sub>2</sub>S concentration in a gaseous state exceeds 100 PPM.

v. Secondary Well Control. Wells where the 100-ppm H<sub>2</sub>S radius of exposure incorporates a public area shall possess a secondary means of immediate well control through the use of appropriate christmas tree or downhole completion equipment. Such equipment shall allow downhole accessibility (reentry) under pressure for permanent well control operations.

vi. Automatic Safety Valve or Shutdown. If the 100-ppm radius of exposure involves a public area, the person, operator or facility shall install an automatic safety valve or shutdown at the facility or wellhead or shall install other appropriate shut-in control. The automatic safety valve shall be set to activate upon a release of a potentially hazardous volume of hydrogen sulfide.

b. Tanks or vessels containing 300 ppm or more of hydrogen sulfide in the gaseous mixture shall be subject to the following additional requirements:

1. Each stair or ladder leading to the top of any storage tank shall be chained or marked to restrict entry. For any tank battery that requires fencing pursuant to this Section, a danger sign posted at the gates may be substituted for chaining and signs.

2. The person, operator or facility shall post a danger sign on or within 50 feet of any storage tank to alert persons of the potential hydrogen sulfide danger. For any storage tank for which fencing is required, a danger sign posted at the locked gates shall suffice. The signs shall read "DANGER - POISON GAS", "DANGER - HYDROGEN SULFIDE", or, as appropriate "CAUTION - POISON GAS" or "CAUTION - HYDROGEN SULFIDE" or equivalent language approved by the division. Each sign shall be painted in colors that satisfy Table 1 of ANSI standard Z53.1-1967 or regulations of the federal occupational safety and health administration. The sign(s) shall be legible and large enough to be read by all persons entering the site.

4. Compliance Schedule. Each existing producing well and associated tank battery not currently meeting the requirements and minimum standards set forth herein shall be brought into compliance within one year of the effective date of this Section. Each producing well and tank battery constructed following the effective date of this Section shall be designed, constructed and operated to meet the requirements set forth herein.

H. Personnel Protection and Training. All persons responsible for the implementation of any H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan shall be provided training in hydrogen sulfide hazards, detection, personal protection and contingency procedures.

I. Standards for Equipment That May Be Exposed to Hydrogen Sulfide. Persons, operators and facilities shall choose equipment with consideration for both the H<sub>2</sub>S working environment and anticipated stresses. NACE Standard MR0175 (latest edition) shall be considered when making for metallic equipment selection or, if applicable, adequate protection by chemical inhibition or other methods that controls or limits the corrosive effects of H<sub>2</sub>S shall be used.

J. Hydrogen Sulfide Injection. Injection of fluids containing hydrogen sulfide where the injection fluids are a gaseous mixture, or would be a gaseous mixture in the event of a release to the

atmosphere, and where the 100-ppm radius of exposure includes any public area, shall not be permitted unless first approved by the division after public hearing. Injection facilities and projects that are permitted as of the effective date of this Section are exempt from the provisions of this subsection. Expansions of permitted projects do not need a public hearing.

K. Exemptions. An exemption to the requirements of this Section may be granted by petitioning the director. Any such petition shall provide specific information as to the circumstances that warrant approval of the exemption requested and how the public safety will be protected. The director, after considering all relevant factors, may approve an exemption if the circumstances warrant an exemption, if the requirements of this Section are met, and public safety will be protected.

L. Release. Upon a release of hydrogen sulfide the following actions must be taken:

1. Activation of the H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan. The person, operator or facility shall activate the H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan immediately upon an H<sub>2</sub>S release where the potential exists for public exposure to a potentially hazardous volume of H<sub>2</sub>S, or where a sustained concentration of H<sub>2</sub>S greater than 50 ppm exists at the property line of any well, facility or operation.

2. Notification of the Division. The person, operator or facility shall notify the division upon a release of hydrogen sulfide requiring activation of the H<sub>2</sub>S contingency plan as soon as practicable, preferably within one hour of discovery of the release or as soon as possible in cases where prompt response should supercede notification. The person, operator or facility shall submit a full report of the incident to the division on Form C-141 no later than fifteen (15) days following the release.

M. Additional Standards. The division may require more stringent standards on a case-by-case basis than those set forth in this Section, or require corrective actions if necessary, to maintain control of a well or any other facility or to safeguard public safety.