

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
CARLSBAD RESOURCE AREA

Temporary Abandonment of Wells on Federal Lands

Conditions of Approval

According to 43 CFR 3162.3-4-c, " No well may be temporarily abandoned for more than 30 days without the prior approval of the authorized officer".

Temporary Abandonment (TA) status approval requires a successful casing integrity test as follows:

1. Contact the appropriate BLM office at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled Casing Integrity Test. For wells in Eddy County call (505) 887-6544 ; for wells in Lea County call (505) 393-3612.
2. A bridge plug or packer shall be set at a maximum of 50 feet above any open perforations or open hole.
3. All downhole production/injection equipment (tubing, rods, etc.) shall be removed from the casing if they are not isolated by a packer.
4. The production casing shall be filled with corrosion inhibited fluid and pressure tested to 500 psi. The casing shall be capable of holding this pressure for at least 30 minutes with a 10% allowable leak-off.

Wells that successfully pass the casing integrity test will be approved for Temporary Abandonment (TA) status for 12 months provided that the operator:

1. Submits a subsequent Sundry Notice requesting TA approval.
2. Attaches a clear copy or the original of the pressure test chart.
3. And explains why such a well should not be plugged and abandoned.

The TA status could be extended without another casing integrity test provided there was no leak-off during the test and the test was witnessed by a BLM representative.

If the well does not pass the casing integrity test, then the operator shall within 30 days submit to BLM for approval one of the following:

1. A procedure to repair the casing so that a TA approval can be granted.
2. A procedure to plug and abandon the well.