

(Rev: 1/12/95)

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
CARLSBAD RESOURCE AREA

Temporary Abandonment of Wells on Federal Lands

Conditions of Approval

Temporary Abandonment (TA) status approval requires: A) Successful Casing Integrity Test and, B) Successful Bradenhead Test.

Any temporary abandonment request must be submitted on a Sundry Notice (Form 3160-5), one (1) original signature and five (5) copies, and include the following:

1. Justification why the well should be temporarily abandoned rather than permanently plugged and abandoned.
2. Description of the temporary abandonment procedure.
3. A complete wellbore diagram shown as temporarily abandoned.
4. The anticipated date the operations will occur.

Contact the appropriate BLM office at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled Casing Integrity and the Bradenhead Tests. For wells in Eddy County call (505) 887-6544 ; for wells in Lea County call (505) 393-3612.

A) Casing Integrity Test for TA:

1. Install an isolation device (such as a retainer or bridge plug) within 50' to 100' of the top perforation or cement plug that extends at least 50' above each set of open perforations. Unless prior approval is granted by the Authorized Officer, fill the well bore with conditioned, non-corrosive fluid and shut-in at the surface. If a cement plug is used, the top of the cement must be verified by tagging. If the wellbore had more than one producing horizon, the lower set(s) of perforations or open hole must meet the requirements for permanent plug to abandonment, unless justification is provided by the operator not to do so.

2. A test demonstrating casing mechanical integrity is required. An approved method is a pressure test of the casing and uppermost plug. The pressure test conducted shall be a minimum of 500 psi surface pressure with less than 10 percent pressure drop within thirty (30) minutes. In no event shall the pressure test required exceed seventy (70) percent of the internal yield of the casing. In the case of an unsuccessful test, the operator shall either correct the problem or plan to plug and abandon the well. Alternative methods demonstrating casing mechanical integrity may be approved by the Authorized Officer on a case-by-case basis.

B) Bradenhead Test for TA:

1. Record the pressure measured on each casing string, including intermediate casing, using deadweight or calibrated pressure gauge.

2. Open the bradenhead valve to the atmosphere. If gas or water flow is observed or indicated, flow the bradenhead for a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes and record pressures at five (5) minute intervals on the production, intermediate and surface casing. Describe in detail any fluids flowing from the bradenhead including measured or estimated rates of flow. A water and/or gas analysis may be required.

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

1. Submits within thirty (30) days a subsequent Sundry Notice (one (1) original signature and five (5) copies) requesting TA approval,

2. Attaches a clear copy or the original of the pressure test charts.

If the well does not pass the casing integrity test and/or the bradenhead test, then the operator shall within 90 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.