



Division of
OIL & GAS
Resources Management
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Orphan Well Program
2207 Reiser Avenue SE
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
330-308-0007

oilandgas.ohiodnr.gov

I believe there is an orphan well on my property and would like to talk to an inspector about this well.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

WORK PHONE: (_____) _____ HOME PHONE: (_____) _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

CITY: _____

MAILING ADDRESS (if different): _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

COUNTY: _____ TOWNSHIP: _____

API WELL NUMBER (if known):

- - -

You may also email the completed form to OrphanWellProgram@dnr.ohio.gov

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A COMPLAINT IS FILED?

The ODNR Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management will investigate each complaint to determine if the well qualifies for the Orphan Well Program. To qualify, a well must be verified as an oil and gas well and 1) have no legal owner with the money to plug the well, or 2) the division has forfeited the owner's surety bond. An inspector must be able to observe and document the condition of the well during a site visit. The division does not excavate property to search for abandoned wells. Instead, it is the landowner's responsibility to locate and expose the well for inspection. Due to the hazards involved, the landowner should contract with an oil and gas contractor to expose the well. A public notice is run in local newspapers to try to determine if there are lien holders or interest in the abandoned well and/or related equipment. A title search is then completed in the county records and letters are sent to notify those identified in the search of the Division's plans to plug the well.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PLUG A WELL AFTER A COMPLAINT IS FILED?

Filing time varies depending on the process. Wells plugged through the Emergency Services Process may be plugged as soon as a plugging contractor can be secured. Wells plugged under the Landowner Pass-through Payment Plugging Agreement must be plugged within the State's fiscal biennium. Wells plugged through the Traditional Process may take longer depending on the safety ranking of the well.



HOW WILL I KNOW IF I HAVE A LEAKING ABANDONED OIL AND GAS WELL ON MY PROPERTY?

Oil and gas wells have been found under buildings, houses, streets, as well as in lawns and recreation areas. Some of the signs you may notice are:

- a visible large diameter pipe or wellhead
- an area where vegetation will not grow
- the odor of crude oil or natural gas
- a water well contaminated by saltwater, crude oil or natural gas
 - Saltwater contamination may increase water hardness or inhibit freezing.
 - Crude oil may appear as either a thick layer or thin "rainbow" sheen on the water surface.
 - Natural gas in a water well may be signaled by:
 - pressure surges
 - a natural gas odor
 - bubbling in the water

WHAT IS THE ORPHAN WELL PROGRAM?

The Orphan Well Program was established in 1977 to plug improperly abandoned oil and natural gas wells. Funded by a portion of the state tax on oil and gas production, Ohio's program has plugged approximately 2,300 wells and is nationally recognized. Proper plugging of orphan wells is necessary to protect public health and safety, conserve natural resources and allow the efficient development of Ohio's oil and gas resources. Three separate processes are used to plug these wells:

TRADITIONAL PROCESS is used to plug wells that do not qualify for emergency action. These wells are grouped by priority and geographic location for state contract bid.

EMERGENCY SERVICES PROCESS is used when a sudden problem threatens physical harm to the public or the environment. Only wells that are an immediate hazard qualify for plugging through this process.

LANDOWNER PASS-THROUGH PAYMENT PLUGGING AGREEMENT allows landowners to act as the general contractor to plug and restore the well through a well-plugging contractor. If the contracting and plugging process meet the requirements of law, then the well-plugging contractor is reimbursed for reasonable costs up to the maximum contract amount. Wells plugged under this process are selected on a quarterly basis until all of the funds are spent.

Place stamp
here. Post
office will
not deliver
mail without
postage.

ODNR Division of Oil & Gas Resources Management
ATTN: Orphan Well Program
2207 Reiser Avenue SE
New Philadelphia, OH 44663-3333

WHO ACTUALLY PLUGS THE WELLS?

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management (DOGRM) awards a contract to a qualified bidder who has experience in oil and gas well drilling and plugging.

WHAT IS THE WELL PLUGGED WITH?

Class A Portland cement is generally used to plug a well, however, a 9 Sack Grout mix may be used with DOGRM approval and if well conditions allow.

WHAT TYPE OF EQUIPMENT WILL THE PLUGGING CONTRACTOR USE?

The size and type of rig used to plug a well usually depends on the condition and depth of the well and the size and amount of casing in the well. Typically, contractors use a service rig to plug wells. These rigs generally weigh approximately 16 tons and have a mast height of approximately 40 feet. Along with the rig, associated equipment including water tanks and mud pumps are also kept on location. All fluid and solid waste generated during the plugging activities will be removed from the site by registered haulers, if applicable, and disposed of at approved facilities. The inspector will talk to the landowner about the location of utilities, drain tiles and other information that will be useful in choosing the best access route.

WHY AM I ASKED TO SIGN A RIGHT OF ENTRY RELEASE?

Ohio law gives the state authority to enter properties to inspect and plug wells. The right of entry release is a record of your consent to allow contractors hired by the state to enter your property and plug the well.

WHO OVERSEES THE PLUGGING OPERATION?

An inspector with the DOGRM will be present during key phases of the plugging procedure to ensure compliance with the contract.

HOW LONG WILL THE PLUGGING OPERATION LAST?

The plugging procedure may last from one day to six weeks with the average being one to two weeks.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A PLUGGED WELL BEGINS TO LEAK AGAIN?

Contact the DOGRM and an inspector will promptly review the condition of the well. After the site inspection and a review of the available records, DOGRM staff will determine if the well should be plugged again or vented to remove any concerns for safety.



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Landowner's Guide to the
**ORPHAN
WELL
PLUGGING
PROGRAM**

Frequently asked questions about plugging
abandoned oil and gas wells in Ohio

