

Site Remediation Reform Act (SRRA) Listserv Archives

June 30, 2017 - [SRRA]: Alternate Decommissioning Reports Now Available for Lost and Destroyed Wells

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Subject [SRRA]: Alternate Decommissioning Reports Now Available for Lost and Destroyed Wells

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Licensed site remediation professionals (LSRPs) preparing reports for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Site Remediation and Waste Management Program (SRWMP), often consult the NJDEP's well permitting staff about changing the status of lost or destroyed wells to "decommissioned." Until recently, this could only be done for wells for which a New Jersey licensed well driller submitted a decommissioning report documenting the proper closure of the well. There was no clear procedure on how to account for lost or destroyed wells where proper decommissioning was not possible. Such wells continued to appear as 'Active' in NJDEP databases. Recently, the Bureau of Water Allocation and Well Permitting (BWAWP) within NJDEP's Division of Water Supply and Geoscience, developed guidance for the reporting of damaged, destroyed, and/or lost wells. The recommended steps and documentation are listed below.

The LSRP starts the process by submitting the necessary information to the BWAWP. Once the information is reviewed, the LSRP will receive either a letter stating that the well is now considered to be lost/destroyed or further work is needed to resolve the fate of the well. The letter from BWAWP serves as an "alternate" decommissioning report for a destroyed well. For wells reported lost, the letter reminds the property owner of the obligation to decommission the well when it is discovered or becomes accessible in the future. If additional information is needed, the LSRP will receive a letter specifying what is needed.

To date, the well permitting program has issued 2 lost well and 12 destroyed well letters addressing 28 wells in total. Ultimately, the status of lost or destroyed for each well will be viewable online via DataMiner reports.

The "Guidance for Damaged, Destroyed or Lost Wells" is found starting on page 3 of www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/pdf/wells-lostdestroy.pdf. The Guidance provides a general understanding of what types of information and level of effort is needed prior to BWAWP determining the fate of the well as either lost or destroyed. Any comments or questions regarding the well permitting program can be directed to wellpermitting@dep.nj.gov.

Proactive tracking and protection of wells, especially during periods of active construction or demolition, is the best and most effective way to avoid added costs until the well can be decommissioned properly. Suggested actions and contact information are also provided below.

The BWAWP recommends that the following actions be taken to avoid damage or loss of a well, particularly if there will be ongoing demolition, excavation, and/or vehicle traffic in the vicinity of the well(s) or if wells are infrequently monitored. Wells should be clearly marked or protected by using one of the following methods: 1) neon paint; 2) concrete barriers; 3) fence or rope; or 4) steel plate cover over the well (for flush mount installations). Maintain an accurate inventory of all the wells (production and environmental) at the site and include the following: 1) well permit number; 2) local ID/site specific ID; and 3) well locational information (northing and easting). The inventory should also include results of annual inspections and photographs to determine the condition of the wells. At least one of the photographs should depict observable landmarks around the well to assist with field identification. The well permit number must be permanently affixed to the well pursuant to the Well Construction & Maintenance; Sealing of Abandoned Wells rules, N.J.A.C. 7:9D-2.4(a)1. The well permit number should also be included on Monitoring Well Certification Forms A (as-built certification) & B

(location certification), which are submitted to SRWMP, in the indicated spaces.

By visiting the well permitting program's website (www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/pw_permit.html), LSRPs can perform their own well searches by using the "Online Reports" tool. If a well cannot be found by using this tool, then request BWAWP staff to conduct a more thorough search of the NJDEP databases by completing an "Individual Well Search Questionnaire." Note: PDFs are available online for those well documents submitted electronically by the driller (as indicated in the leftmost column labeled "Download PDF"). Any comments or questions regarding the well permitting program can be directed to wellpermitting@dep.nj.gov.

SRP Site Remediation Reform Act (SRRA) Web site: www.nj.gov/dep/srp/

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