

SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY

2015-03

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BC Oil & Gas COMMISSION



Integrity of Casing Welds

The BC Oil and Gas Commission (Commission) reminds permit holders that they are required to maintain well integrity at all times. The Commission recommends that permit holders identify all wells that have been re-entered after abandonment, and to review the available information related to the casing welding. If there is insufficient information to demonstrate the long-term integrity of the well casing extension, permit holders should consider the following:

- To permanently plug and abandon the well, or
- To isolate the casing from production fluids, by installing a bridge plug or packer and tubing, or
- To install an automated leak detection system.

The following requirements apply to the welding of well casings:

- Welders must be qualified as pressure welders, and
- Welding must be completed in accordance with a qualified welding procedure developed in accordance with the ASME Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Section IX.

This follows an investigation into a December 2014 incident where a casing failure on an inactive natural gas well resulted in a release of sour natural gas containing approximately three per cent H₂S for two days. Once the release was contained, the casing failure was repaired and the well was subsequently abandoned. There were no injuries and there was no evidence that corrosion was a significant factor in the failure. This incident is currently under investigation and the Commission will publish a full investigation report when finalized.

The Commission is aware of one other well where a similar failure occurred in 2014, but did not result in an incident.

If you have any questions regarding this Safety and Environmental Advisory, please contact:

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