

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
Oil and Gas Division

NOTICE TO OPERATORS

**Rule 13 Exceptions: Online Filing System and
Implementation of Exception Fee**

The Railroad Commission of Texas (Commission) will soon complete the design and development of the online filing application for exceptions to 16 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §3.13 (Statewide Rule 13), regarding *Casing, Cementing, Drilling, Well Control, and Completion Requirements*, and expects to implement the system in March 2015. This system will enable operators to submit exception requests to the Commission more conveniently and quickly, and will enable Commission staff to review those requests in a more prompt and efficient manner. The system will also audit each submission to minimize errors and provide for fee payments through the official website for the State of Texas at <http://www.texas.gov>.

Collection of the rule exception fee will begin concurrently with the release of the online filing application. The statutory rule exception fee is subject to a surcharge which funds the operations of the Commission's Oil & Gas Division. Based on the current surcharge percentage, **the total assessment for an exception to Statewide Rule 13 will be: \$150 fee + \$225 surcharge = \$375.** [See 16 TAC §78(b)(4) and §78(n)(3) for further information regarding rule exception fees and mandatory surcharges.]

Important Note: the rule exception fee is required for all exceptions regardless of the filing method; both hardcopy and online filings must be accompanied by the fee payments.

Online filings are encouraged. After release of the online filing system, all hardcopy applications (and fees payments) must be sent to the Commission's Austin office, Attention Oil & Gas Division, P.O. Box 12967, Austin, Texas 78711-2967. The hardcopy applications will be processed into the online system for review. Any hardcopy applications sent to the Commission's district offices after the release date will be forwarded to the Austin office before review can begin. **Applications submitted via fax will no longer be accepted by the Commission.**

The amendments to the Statewide Rule 13 were adopted by the Commission on May 24, 2013 to implement certain provisions of House Bill 2694 (82nd Legislature, Regular Session, 2011) and became effective on January 1, 2014. The adopted amendments also served to clarify and update the surface casing and cementing requirements for all wells, and to consolidate and update the requirements for well control and blow-out preventers.

Following the adoption of the Statewide Rule 13 amendments, the Commission held workshops at various locations throughout the state to answer questions, clarify requirements, and discuss implementation of an exception procedure. At those workshops, among many topics, staff presented information about the Commission's intention to develop an online application to assist with exception requests and collect the rule exception fee payments and surcharge required under Texas Natural Resource Code §81.0521 and §81.070.

The release of the online application will be announced on the Commission's website at <http://www.rrc.texas.gov> and through the Oil & Gas News email subscription. To subscribe, visit the Commission's website at <http://www.rrc.texas.gov/about-us/resource-center/subscription-services/> under "Oil & Gas News".

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