

***RULES AND  
REGULATIONS***

OF THE

***STERLING COUNTY UNDERGROUND  
WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT***

Adopted April 13, 2009



## **PREAMBLE**

The purpose of this District is to conserve, preserve, and protect groundwater supplies, to protect and enhance recharge, to prevent waste and pollution, and to effect the efficient, beneficial and wise use of groundwater resources, by monitoring the quality and quantity, for the benefit of the citizens and economy of the District. To carry out this purpose, these rules and regulations are passed, adopted and will be enforced to minimize as far as practicable the draw down of the water table, depletion of the groundwater reservoirs and aquifers, interference between wells, reduction of artesian pressure, and waste, pollution, or harmful alteration of the character of the groundwater. These Rules apply to all groundwater aquifers and water-bearing formations located within the District's jurisdictional boundaries however, at its discretion, the District may consider undesirable or brackish water differently than fresh water. The District also strives to maintain groundwater ownership and rights of the owners of the land and their lessees as provided in the Texas Water Code §36.002.



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## SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

### SUBSECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

#### RULE 1.101 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The District follows the definitions of terms set forth in Texas Water Code Chapter 36 and other definitions as set forth herein. Unless the context hereof indicates a contrary meaning, the words hereinafter defined shall have the following meaning in these rules:

- (1) **“Abandoned Well”** shall mean a water well that has not been used for six consecutive months. A water well is considered to be in use in the following cases:
  - (a) a non-deteriorated well which contains the casing, pump, and pump column in good condition; or
  - (b) a non-deteriorated well which has been capped.
- (2) **“Acre-foot or ac/ft”** is the amount of water necessary to cover one acre of land to a depth of one foot, approximately 325,851 gallons.
- (3) **“Act”** shall mean the District’s enabling legislation, S.B. 206 of the 69<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, as amended.
- (4) **“Agent”** shall mean the person authorized to act on behalf of the landowner with respect to obtaining permits and registering wells.
- (5) **“Applicant”** shall mean the owner of the land on which the well(s) or proposed well(s) are located, unless the landowner authorizes another person to act on his/her behalf with respect to transactions involving the Sterling County Underground Water Conservation District.
- (6) **“Aquifer”** shall mean a geologic formation with water in sufficient quantities to make the production of water from this formation feasible for beneficial use.
- (7) **“Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project”** shall mean a process of storing water through injection wells or other means into a suitable aquifer for later recovery or retrieval.
- (8) **“Area of Hydrologic Impact”** shall mean, as projected on the land surface, the aerial extent of the migration of a subsurface water-bearing reservoir having ascertainable boundaries.

- (9) **“Available Groundwater”** shall mean the allocation provided by the Texas Water Development Board based on the desired future condition adopted for groundwater management area 7 for the district.
- (10) **“Beneficial Use”** or **“Beneficial Purpose”** shall mean the use of water in a nonwasteful manner for one or more beneficial purposes as defined in Texas Water Code Section 36.001, including but not limited to agricultural use, domestic use, stock-raising, municipal use, mining, industrial use including manufacturing, commercial use, non-agricultural irrigation, recreational use including pleasure uses, oil and gas operations, or other uses including extraction for the purposes of remediation, injection operations, or leachate operations..
- (11) **“Bentonite”** shall mean a sodium hydrous aluminum silicate clay mineral (montmorillonite) commercially available in powdered, granular, or pellet form which may be mixed with potable water and used to provide a seal in the annular space between the well casing and borehole wall or used in the plugging of wells
- (12) **“Board”** shall mean the Board of Directors of the Sterling County Underground Water Conservation District, consisting of five (5) duly elected members.
- (13) **“Casing”** shall mean a tubular watertight structure installed in the excavated or drilled hole to maintain the well opening and, along with cementing, to confine ground waters to their zones of origin and prevent the entrance of surface pollutants.
- (14) **“Cement”** shall mean a neat Portland or construction cement mixture of not more than seven (7) gallons of water per 94-pound sack of dry cement, or a cement slurry which contains cement along with bentonite, gypsum, or other additives.
- (15) **“Completion”** shall mean sealing off access of undesirable water to the well bore by proper casing and/or cementing procedures and adhering to State standards for completion.
- (16) **“Conservation”** shall mean:
- (a) the development of water resources and the management of depletion of these resources as it relates to the conservation, preservation, protection, recharging, and prevention of waste of groundwater, and of groundwater reservoirs or their subdivisions; and
  - (b) those practices, techniques, and technologies that will reduce the consumption of water, reduce the loss or waste of water, improve the efficiency in the use of water, or

increase the recycling and reuse of water so that a water supply is made available for future or alternative uses.

- (17) **“Deteriorated Well”** shall mean a water well, the condition of which will cause, or is likely to cause, pollution of any water in the District.
- (18) **“District”** shall mean the Sterling County Underground Water Conservation District.
- (19) **“District Office”** shall mean the office of the District, as established by the Board, to which applications, reports, and other papers are required to be filed with or sent.
- (20) **“Domestic Well”** shall mean a well producing water exclusively used by an individual or a household for: drinking, washing, or culinary purposes; irrigation of lawns, a family garden or orchard; and watering domestic animals.
- (21) **“Driller’s Log or Well Log”** shall mean a log, accurately kept, on forms prescribed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, or any successor regulatory agency with jurisdiction therefor, at the time of drilling showing the depth, thickness, character of the different strata penetrated, location of water-bearing strata, depth, size and character of casing installed, together with any other data or information required by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation or of this Board.
- (22) **“Drought”** shall mean:
  - (a) a long period of below normal rainfall resulting in a depletion in aquifer levels that has persisted for a period of a year or more following establishment of baseline water levels in the District; or
  - (b) a determination of drought conditions by an agency of the State or Federal Government.
- (23) **“Exempt Well”** shall mean any well for which the District does not require a permit. An exempt well shall be exempt from permitting requirements, but shall not be exempt from preregistration and registration requirements or spacing rules.
- (24) **“Existing Well”** shall mean a well which was drilled before the date these Rules are adopted and which is not abandoned or sealed, or a well which was not completed on said date but for which a registration was on file with the District on such date.
- (25) **“Groundwater”** shall mean water percolating below the surface of the earth within the District.
- (26) **“Groundwater Reservoir”** shall mean a specific subsurface water-bearing reservoir having ascertainable boundaries containing groundwater.

- (27) **“GPM”** or **“gpm”** shall mean gallons per minute and is a measurement of the yield or production capabilities of an individual well or pump unit.
- (28) **“Installer”** shall mean an individual who installs or repairs pumps and equipment for hire or compensation and holds a current pump installers license with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.
- (29) **“Licensed Water Well Driller”** shall mean any person who holds a license issued by the State of Texas pursuant to the provisions of the Texas Water Well Drillers Act, as amended, and the substantive rules of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation or its successors.
- (30) **“Managed Available Groundwater”** or **“MAG”** shall mean the amount of groundwater available to be issued in permits based on the groundwater allocation by the Texas Water Development Board as adjusted for exempt groundwater uses projected for the planning period.
- (31) **“Monitoring Well”** shall mean a well installed to measure some property of the groundwater or aquifer which it penetrates that does not produce groundwater for the purpose of water supply.
- (32) **“New Well”** shall mean a well for which a notice of intention to drill or a permit is required pursuant to these Rules.
- (33) **“Non-Exempt Well”** shall mean any well not exempt under these rules or Texas Water Code, §36.117. Non-exempt wells require a permit.
- (34) **“Notice of Intent to Drill”** shall mean a preregistration form that must be submitted to the District by the landowner or his agent prior to the drilling of an exempt well or monitor well.
- (35) **“Open Meetings Act”** shall mean Chapter 551, Texas Government Code.
- (36) **“Open Records Act”** shall mean Chapter 552, Texas Government Code.
- (37) **“Open or Uncovered Well”** shall mean any artificial excavation drilled or dug for the purpose of producing water from the underground reservoir, not capped or covered as required by these rules.
- (38) **“Owner or Operator”** shall mean and include any person, firm, partnership, corporation, municipality, county, state or other political subdivision that has the right to produce water from the land either by ownership, contract, lease, easement, or any other estate in the land.

- (39) “**Permit**” shall mean a permit issued by the District for a properly spaced non-exempt well.
- (40) “**Permitted Well**” shall mean any artificial excavation drilled or dug for the purpose of producing groundwater that:
- (a) is not exempt under Texas Water Code §36.117 or Rule 1.101(30);
  - (b) is properly registered with the District; and
  - (c) has been issued an operating permit by the District.
- (41) “**Person**” shall mean and include any individual, partnership, firm, corporation, entity, municipal corporation, unincorporated area, government, or governmental subdivision or agency, business, trust, estate, trust, or any other legal entity or association.
- (42) “**Plugging**” shall mean an absolute sealing of the well bore.
- (43) “**Pollution**” shall mean the alteration of the physical, thermal, chemical, or biological quality of, or the contamination of, any water in the District that renders the water harmful, detrimental or injurious to humans, animal life, vegetation, property or to public health, safety, or welfare, or impairs the usefulness or the public enjoyment of the water for any lawful or reasonable purpose.
- (44) “**Preregistration**” or “**preregistration application**” shall mean the completion and submission of a Notice of Intent to Drill form prior to the drilling of any well and production of water.
- (45) “**Production**” shall mean water withdrawn from the ground, measured at the well head and reported as gallons per minute (gpm) or acre feet (ac/ft).
- (46) “**Recharge Facility**” shall mean any system for recharge, injection, storage, pressure maintenance, cycling or recycling of water, which includes one or more wells, spreading dams, or percolation basins, or any other surface or subsurface system engineered and designed for the purpose of recharging water into a groundwater reservoir.
- (47) “**Regional Water Plan**” shall mean the plan adopted or amended by a regional water planning group pursuant to the Texas Water Code §16.053 and Title 31, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 357, as amended.
- (48) “**Registered Well**” shall mean and includes any artificial excavation to produce or that is producing water for any purpose that has been properly recorded with the District.
- (49) “**Subdivision of a groundwater reservoir**” shall mean a definable part of a groundwater reservoir in which the groundwater supply will not be appreciably affected

by withdrawing water from any other part of the reservoir, as indicated by known geological and hydrological conditions and relationships and on foreseeable economic development at the time the subdivision is designated or altered.

- (50) **“Transportation facility”** shall mean any system for transporting water, which may include a pipeline, channel, ditch, watercourse or other natural or artificial facilities, or any combination of such facilities, pertaining to any or all water which is produced from a well or wells located or to be located within the District, any or all of which is used or intended for use outside the boundaries of the District.
- (51) **“Undesirable Water”** shall mean water that is injurious to vegetation, to land or to fresh water, or water that can cause pollution.
- (52) **“Waste”** as used herein shall have the same meaning as defined by the Texas Water Code, Chapter 36.
- (53) **“Water”** shall mean groundwater.
- (54) **“Well”** or **“Water Well”** shall mean and include any artificial excavation constructed for the purpose of exploring for or producing groundwater.
- (55) **“Well Location”** shall mean the location of an existing or proposed water well on an application duly filed until such application is granted or denied, or the location of a well on a valid permit
- (56) **“Well log”** shall mean a “Drillers Log”
- (57) **“Well Registration”** shall mean District recording of exempt well information e.g. owner-address, location, type, use, log, yield, quality and any additional information the District may feel pertinent.
- (58) **“Well Status”** means either new, operational or capped.
- (59) **“Well System”** means a well or group of wells tied to the same distribution system.
- (60) **“Withdrawal”** means extracting groundwater by pumping or any other method.

## **SUBSECTION 2. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **RULE 1.201 USE AND EFFECT OF RULES**

(a) The District uses these Rules as guides in the exercise of the powers conferred to it by Texas Water Code Chapter 36 and in the accomplishment of the purposes of the Act. They shall not be

construed as a limitation or restriction on the exercise of any discretion, where it exists; nor shall they be construed to deprive the District or Board of the exercise of any powers, duties or jurisdiction conferred by law; nor shall they be construed to limit or restrict the amount and character of data or information that may be required to be collected for the proper administration of the Act.

(b) Except as otherwise specified, these rules are effective on the date of adoption by the Board of Directors. References to Texas Water Code Chapter 36, Title 16 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 76, Title 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 285 and Title 31 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 357 include subsequent revisions and are effective upon the effective date of these Rules or upon the effective date of subsequent amendments to these Codes.

#### **RULE 1.202 AMENDING OF RULES**

(a) The Board may, following notice and hearing, amend these Rules or adopt new Rules from time to time.

#### **RULE 1.203 HEADINGS AND CAPTIONS**

(a) The section and other headings and captions contained in these Rules are for reference purposes only and shall not affect in any way the meaning or interpretation of these Rules.

#### **RULE 1.204 SEVERABILITY**

(a) If any one or more of the provisions contained in these Rules is for any reason held to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable in any respect, the invalidity, illegality, or unenforceability shall not affect any other Rules or provisions thereof, and these Rules shall be construed as if such invalid, illegal, or unenforceable rule or provision had never been contained in these Rules.

#### **RULE 1.205 COMPUTING TIME**

(a) In computing any period of time prescribed or allowed by these Rules, by order of the Board, or by any applicable statute, the day of the act, event, or default from which the designated period of time begins to run, is not to be included, but the last day of the period so computed is to be included, unless it is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday on which the District is closed, in which event the period runs until the end of the next day that is neither a Saturday, Sunday, or a legal holiday on which the District is closed. Legal holidays are the same as adopted by the Sterling County Commissioners Court.

## **RULE 1.206 TIME LIMITS**

(a) Applications, requests, or other papers or documents required or permitted to be filed under these Rules must be received for filing at the District, within the time limit, if any, for such filing. The date of receipt and not the date of posting is determinative.

## **RULE 1.207 METHODS OF FILING AND SERVICE UNDER THE RULES**

(a) Documents shall be filed at the District Office either by hand delivery, mail, telephonic document transfer, or other district approved method(s). The document shall be considered filed as of the date received by the District for a hand delivery and for other district approved method(s); as of the date reflected by the official United States Postal Service postmark if mailed; and for telephonic document transfers, as of the date on which the telephonic document transfer is complete, except that any transfer occurring after 5:00 p.m. will be deemed complete on the following business day.

(b) Except as otherwise expressly provided elsewhere in these Rules, any notice or document required by these Rules to be served or delivered may be delivered to the recipient, or the recipient's authorized representative, in person, by courier, receipted delivery, by certified mail sent to the recipient's last known address, or by telephonic document transfer to the recipient's current telecopier number. Service by mail is complete upon deposit in any depository of the United States Postal Service. Service by telephonic document transfer is complete upon transfer, except that any transfer occurring after 5:00 p.m. in the recipient's time zone shall be deemed to be completed the following business day. If service is by mail, and the recipient has the right, or is required, to do some act within a prescribed period of time after service, three days will be added to the prescribed period from the date of deposit in the post office. Where service by other methods has proved impossible, the service is complete upon publication of notice in a newspaper with general circulation in the District.

(c) The District's mailing address is: P.O. Box 873, Sterling City, TX 76951 and

## **RULE 1.208 MEETINGS**

(a) The Board will hold a regular meeting each month on a day the Board may establish from time to time by resolution. At the request of the Chair, or by written request of at least two members, the Board may hold special meetings. All Board meetings will be held in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.



## **RULE 1.209 MINUTES AND RECORDS OF THE DISTRICT**

(a) All official documents, reports, records and minutes of the District will be available for public inspection and copying in accordance with the Texas Open Records Act. Upon written application of any person, the District will furnish copies of its public records. Persons who are furnished copies may be assessed copying and other charges, pursuant to policies established by the Manager. A list of charges for the copies will be furnished by the District.

## **RULE 1.210 DISTRICT OFFICE**

(a) The District's office is located at 612 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Sterling City, TX. The District's mailing address is: P.O. Box 873, Sterling City, TX 76951, and telephone number is: (325) 378-2704.

## **RULE 1.211 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**

(a) All well owners, operators/lessees, and water well drillers shall comply with all applicable rules and regulations. Where District Rules and regulations are more stringent than those of other governmental entities, the District Rules and regulations shall prevail.

## **SUBSECTION 3. RULEMAKING PROCEDURES**

### **RULE 1.301 APPLICABILITY**

(a) This section applies to rulemaking by the District but does not apply to internal personnel rules or practices, bylaws, statements regarding internal management or organization, or other statements not of general applicability.

### **RULE 1.302 PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PROPOSED RULES**

(a) The Board shall hold at least one public hearing on proposed rules prior to adoption of the proposed rules as final rules.

(b) The Board may direct any person to serve as the presiding officer and to conduct the public hearings on the proposed rules.

(c) Public hearings will be conducted in the manner the Board deems most suitable to conveniently, inexpensively, and expeditiously provide a reasonable opportunity for interested persons to submit relevant data, views, or arguments, in writing or orally, on proposed rules.

### **RULE 1.303 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PROPOSED RULES**

- (a) The Board will set a time and place for any public hearing on proposed rules of the District.
- (b) The General Manager shall give prior notice of the public hearing at least twenty (20) days before the public hearing by posting the notice in the location where notices of the District’s Board meetings are posted and by publishing the notice in one or more newspapers of general circulation within the District, unless the Board determines an emergency to public health or safety exists. Notice for a hearing on proposed rules of the District for emergency situations shall be given at least five (5) days prior to the public hearing.
- (c) The notice shall advise the public of the following:

  - (1) the proposed agenda;
  - (2) the date, place, and time the public hearing is to be convened;
  - (3) the date and time by which written comments must be filed with the District; and
  - (4) the place at which written comments must be filed with the District.
- (d) Proposed rules shall be available for use and inspection at the District Office.

### **RULE 1.304 ADOPTION OF RULES**

- (a) The Board may adopt proposed rules as final rules at any time after the completion of the public hearing(s) and after the close of the written comment period.
- (b) The Board will compile its rules and make them available for public use and inspection at the District’s principal office.

## **SECTION 2. WASTE AND POLLUTION**

### **RULE 2.101 PROHIBITION OF WASTE**

- (a) Groundwater shall not be produced within, or used within or without the District, in such a manner or under such conditions as to constitute waste.
- (b) Any person producing or using groundwater shall use every possible precaution, in accordance with the most approved methods, to stop and prevent waste of such water regardless of whether the groundwater is used inside or outside the District.
- (c) All groundwater that is to be transported a distance greater than one-quarter (1/4) mile from

the well shall be transported by a pipeline to prevent waste caused by evaporation and percolation and promote conservation by preventing unnecessary loss of groundwater.

## **RULE 2.102 PROHIBITION OF POLLUTION**

(a) No person shall pollute or harmfully alter the character of the groundwater reservoir, or surface water, within the District by means of salt water or other deleterious matter admitted from some other stratum or strata or from the surface of the ground.

## **SECTION 3. WELL REGISTRATION AND PERMITS**

### **SUBSECTION 1. WELL REGISTRATION**

#### **RULE 3.101 REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

(a) Well registration is required for all existing and future wells, whether exempt or non-exempt, within the District and shall be filed in the District Office on a form(s) and in the manner required by the District.

#### **RULE 3.102 PREREGISTRATION FOR ALL NEW WELLS**

(a) A completed preregistration application (Notice of Intent to Drill), furnished by the District, shall be filed with the District at least five (5) business days prior to drilling of any new well.

(b) Preregistration shall include but is not limited to the following information:

- (1) name, address, and phone number of well owner;
- (2) name and phone number of the driller;
- (3) well location - including the county, section, block, survey number, abstract number, longitude and latitude; and
- (4) proposed well use;

(c) The preregistration application shall be signed by the landowner or his duly appointed agent, including a partner, operator/lessee, driller, or any other person who has the authority to construct the well and/or operate the well for the proposed use.

(d) The preregistration application may be submitted either by hand delivery, mail, telephonic

document transfer, telephone or e-mail.

### **RULE 3.103 PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS**

(a) The District staff will review the preregistration application filed and make a preliminary determination as to whether the well meets drilling and operating permit exclusions and exemptions provided in these Rules and Texas Water Code §36.117. The District staff must inform the applicant of their determination within five (5) business days. If the preliminary determination is that the well is exempt from the requirements for an operating permit, the applicant may begin drilling immediately upon receiving notification of the determination.

(b) After the exempt status has been determined, the well, if drilled, must be drilled within 30 feet from the location given on the preregistration application and in compliance with all applicable District rules. The District shall have the right to confirm reported distances and inspect the wells or well locations.

(c) If the District determines the well is not exempt, the applicant will proceed in accordance with Section 3. Well Registration and Permits, Subsection 2. Permits and may not proceed with drilling until a permit is issued.

### **RULE 3.104 COLLECTION OF ADDITIONAL WELL REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

(a) The District will collect additional registration information for all exempt wells within the District. The owner, or operator/lessee, of an exempt well shall cooperate with the District in its efforts to collect registration information on all such wells.

(b) Registration information collected by the District shall include, but not limited to, the following information in sufficient detail to be acceptable to the District:

- (1) name, address, and phone number of the well owner, name, address, and phone number of the operator/lessee if different than the surface owner, and name, address, and phone number of the owner of the groundwater if different than the surface owner of the land upon which the well is located or to be located, and operated;
- (2) location of the well - including the county, city block and lot, section, block, survey number, abstract number, longitude and latitude, acreage or lot size, and the distance in feet to the nearest non-parallel property lines;
- (3) well use or proposed use;
- (4) well status (operational or capped);

- (5) driller and date drilled;
- (6) total well depth;
- (7) static water level;
- (8) well construction (casing type, depth and size);
- (9) surface completion;
- (10) pump type and size;
- (11) production (gallons per minute or annual usage); and
- (12) such additional data as may be required by the Board.

### **RULE 3.105 RE-REGISTRATION**

(a) If the owner, or operator/lessee, of a registered well plans to change the use of the water, increase the production rate of the water, or to substantially alter the size of the well or well pump in a manner that does not require a permit, the owner shall notify the District within sixty (60) days after completion of the alterations.

(b) If the alterations would require the well to be permitted, the owner, or operator/lessee, shall apply for a permit in compliance with Section 3. Well Registration and Permits, Subsection 2. Permits prior to completion of the alteration.

### **RULE 3.106 VIOLATION OF DISTRICT RULES**

(a) It is a violation of the District Rules for a well owner, operator/lessee, or water well driller to drill any well until a preregistration application (Notice of Intent to Drill) has been filed with the District and approved.

## **SUBSECTION 2. PERMITS**

### **RULE 3.201 PERMIT REQUIRED**

(a) A permit from the District is required prior to drilling, equipping, completing, operating, producing or exporting groundwater from any non-exempt well within the District.

(b) The owner, or operator/lessee, of a well to be drilled or altered after the effective date of this rule shall file a permit application in the District Office.

(c) Notwithstanding the requirement of a permit, the owner, or operator/lessee, of a well

producing underground water before the effective date of this rule may continue to produce such water until the District takes final action on the permit application.

### **RULE 3.202 EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITTING**

**(a)** The following wells do not require a permit from the District:

- (1) any well for which the District is prohibited from requiring a permit according to Section 36.117, Texas Water Code; and
- (2) any well used solely for providing water for domestic or livestock use on a tract of land that is 10 acres or less.

**(b)** Unless otherwise provided by Section 36.117, Texas Water Code, all exempt wells shall comply with the District's requirements for registration, preregistration, spacing, submittal of well logs, and any applicable construction standards.

### **RULE 3.203 ISSUANCE OF PERMITS**

**(a)** The Board shall issue or cause to be issued a permit(s) for a well properly spaced, upon proper application executed and filed by the owner or his/her agent with the District and accompanied by the required deposits or fees and containing the matters specified below.

**(b)** All applications shall be in writing, on forms provided by the District and contain the information called for in the application form and shall be prepared in accordance with all instructions which may have been issued by the Board with respect to the filing of an application. An application shall be considered properly filed when completed, signed, and tendered to the District or to a person duly designated by the District to receive the same. Otherwise, the application will not be considered.

**(c)** Rules for filing of applications:

- (1) If the applicant is an individual, the application shall be signed by the applicant or his duly appointed agent. The agent may be requested to present satisfactory evidence of his authority to represent the applicant.
- (2) If the application is by a partnership, the applicant shall be designated by the firm name followed by the words "a Partnership" and the application shall be signed by at least one of the general partners who is duly authorized to bind all of the partners.
- (3) In the case of a corporation, public district, county or municipality, or political subdivision of the State, the application shall be signed by a duly authorized official. A copy of the resolution or other authorization to make the application may be required

by the officer or agent receiving the application.

(4) In the case of an estate or guardianship, the application shall be signed by the duly appointed guardian or representative of the estate.

(d) Applications shall include the required information set forth in this Section.

### **RULE 3.204 PERMIT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

(a) A separate application is required for each well.

(b) Permit application(s) shall include the following information in sufficient detail to be acceptable to the District:

(1) name and address of the well owner, name and address of the operator/lessee if different than the surface owner, and name and address of the owner of the groundwater if different than the surface owner of the land upon which the well is located or to be located;

(2) location or proposed location of the well - including the county, city block and lot, section, block, survey number, abstract number, longitude and latitude, acreage or lot size, and the distance in feet to the nearest non-parallel property lines;

(3) location (distance in feet) of all wells located within one (1) mile radius of the existing or proposed well, and the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the owners and operator/lessee;

(4) a detailed statement of the nature and purpose(s) of the proposed use(s), location(s) of proposed use(s), transportation facility(s) and the amount of groundwater to be used for each purpose, including the estimated annual pumpage volume for the well; an explanation of any anticipated growth in total water demand and associated pumpage needs; and any alternative water sources being used by the applicant;

(5) for a proposed aggregate system, a description of the system and the estimated annual pumpage for the system;

(6) a detailed statement of the existing production rate(s), if applicable;

(7) type of application - new well, rework, redrill, replacement, or other;

(8) total contiguous acreage owned where well is located or is to be drilled;

(9) a statement of the proposed drill date, well depth, static and drawdown level, well completion construction and pump type and size;

(10) a statement by the applicant that the water withdrawn under the permit will be put

to a beneficial, non-wasteful use at all times and that the applicant will comply with all District Rules, orders, and permit provisions;

(11) a water well closure plan or a declaration that the applicant will comply with well plugging and capping guidelines set forth in these Rules and will report well closures to the District;

(12) a water conservation plan, if the applicant is required by law to have a water conservation plan; (13) a drought contingency plan, if the applicant is required by law to have a drought contingency plan; and

(14) any other information deemed necessary for the evaluation of the application by

the Board.

(c) All permit applications or amendments may require additional information. Permit applications or amendments involving export of groundwater from the District shall include the following additional information:

(1) a hydrogeological report describing the projected effect of the proposed withdrawal of groundwater on aquifer conditions, depletion, subsidence, spring flow and existing permit holders or other groundwater users within the District and other pertinent information deemed necessary for the evaluation of the application by the Board. The well must be equipped to test for its ultimate planned use and the hydrogeological report must address the impacts of the well's ultimate planned use. The hydrogeological report shall be prepared by a qualified person who is properly licensed by the State of Texas to prepare such report. The report shall include hydrogeologic information addressing and specifically related to the proposed water pumpage levels at the proposed pumpage site. Applicants may not rely solely on reports previously filed with or prepared by the District. Failure to submit a hydrogeological report as required by the District, shall be grounds for denial of the permit. The Board shall make the final determination of whether a hydrogeological report meets the requirements of this subsection;

(2) identification of any other possible sources which could be used for the stated purposes, including but not limited to, treated water, reuse water and return flows, together with the quality and quantity of such alternate sources;

(3) a proposed plan to mitigate any adverse impacts of the proposed groundwater withdrawal on existing permit holders or other groundwater users within the District;

(4) a proposed plan to mitigate any adverse impacts caused by leakage of undesirable



or brackish water from a transportation facility;

(5) a description of how the proposed groundwater withdrawal is addressed in any approved regional water plan(s);

(6) a detailed description of the transportation facilities to be used for the conveyance of the water and a schedule for construction and/or operation of the facility.

(c) The District shall issue an operating permit for each non-exempt well in the District that was in existence prior to the effective date of these rules.

### **RULE 3.205 PERMIT EVALUATION**

(a) In determining whether to issue a permit, and in setting the terms of the permit, the Board will consider the purposes of the District Act, and other relevant factors, including but not limited to:

(1) whether the application conforms to the requirements of this section and any applicable spacing requirements, density restrictions, or production limits;

(2) whether the proposed use of water is for non-wasteful beneficial use;

(3) whether the proposed use of water unreasonably impacts other landowners' rights in groundwater;

(4) whether the proposed use is consistent with the certified district management plan and approved regional water plan;

(5) whether the applicant has agreed to avoid waste and practice conservation;

(6) whether the applicant has agreed that reasonable diligence will be used to protect groundwater quality and that the applicant will follow plugging guidelines at the time of well closure;

(7) whether the effect of granting the permit on drawdown of the water table, reduction in artesian pressure, or spring flow; and

(8) the quality, quantity, and availability of alternative water supplies.

### **RULE 3.206 TIME AND DISTANCE LIMITS OF A PERMIT**

(a) Any permit granted hereunder shall be valid if the work permitted is completed within **six (6)** months from the date the permit was granted. It shall thereafter be void. Provided, however, that the District, for good cause, may extend the life of such permit for an additional **four (4)** months if an application for such extension is made to the District during the first **four (4)** month period. Provided, further, that when it is made known to the District that a proposed project will take more time to com-

plete, the District upon receiving written application may grant such time as is reasonably necessary to complete such project.

(b) After a permit has been approved, the well, if drilled, must be drilled within 30 feet from the location given on the application and in compliance with all District rules. The District shall have the right to confirm reported distances and inspect the wells or well locations.

### **RULE 3.207 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF PERMITS**

All permits are granted subject to these Rules, orders of the Board, and the laws of the State of Texas. In addition to any special provisions or other requirements incorporated into the permit, each permit issued shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:

(a) After a permit has been approved, the well, if drilled, must be drilled within 30 feet from the location given on the application and in compliance with all District rules. The District shall have the right to confirm reported distances and inspect the wells or well locations.

(b) All permits are effective for a term of five (5) years.

(c) All permittees shall maintain records of the actual amount of production and amount of production for each use. The annual production and use reporting period shall begin on January 1 of each calendar year. These reports shall be filed in the District Office by January 15 of each calendar year.

(d) A permittee who produces groundwater for use outside the district shall maintain records of the actual amount of production, amount for each use, and amount exported from the District. The annual production and use reporting period shall begin on January 1 of each calendar year. These reports shall be filed in the District Office by January 15 of each calendar year.

(e) A permit confers no vested rights in the holder.

(f) A permit grants a right to the well owner, or operator/lessee, to produce water in the amount, and in accordance with the terms of the permit until there is a change, or proposed change, in any of the following:

- (1) ownership of well
- (2) amount of water used
- (3) use of water
- (4) location of use of water

Upon the occurrence, or proposed occurrence of any of these events, a new application(s) for the appropriate permit(s) must be filed with the District, within **ninety (90) days**, to be acted upon, in the

same manner, and in accordance with the same procedures as set forth in this Section for new wells.

(g) All permits issued under these Rules are conditional, and may be revoked or suspended and/or its terms may be modified or amended pursuant to District Rules. The District shall provide reasonable notice and opportunity for hearing before revoking, suspending, modifying or amending a permit.

(h) All groundwater that is to be transported a distance greater than one-half (1/2) mile from the well shall be transported by a pipeline to prevent waste caused by evaporation and percolation and promote conservation by preventing unnecessary loss of groundwater.

### **RULE 3.208 PERMIT AMENDMENTS**

(a) It is a violation of these Rules for a permittee to violate any term, provision, or restriction contained in a permit issued by the District. A permittee must apply for and receive an amendment to their permit prior to changing any term, provision, or restriction in the permit.

(1) minor amendments include a request to:

- (i) change the name or address of the well owner without any change in use or location of use; or
- (ii) decrease the maximum authorized withdrawal.

(2) all other amendments, including all amendments to permits involving the export of groundwater, are major amendments.

(b) Minor amendments may be granted by the Board without notice, hearing, or further action by the Board.

(c) Major amendments shall be subject to all the requirements and procedures applicable to issuance of a new permit for a new well.

(d) An application for permit amendment shall be made on forms supplied by the District and must be accompanied by any applicable application processing fee established by the Board. No application processing fee will be required from permittees requesting a decrease in maximum authorized withdrawal.

(e) An amendment to change the name of a well owner must be submitted within **ninety (90) days** of the transfer of ownership.

### **RULE 3.209 PERMIT RENEWAL**

(a) Well owners or operators shall make application to renew permits required under these

Rules at least three (3) months prior to the expiration of the permit term on an abbreviated form provided by the District. The well owner or operator/lessee shall indicate on the renewal application form whether any changes to the well, well operations, purpose of use, or special conditions have occurred.

**(b)** Renewals shall be accomplished without notice or hearing if the terms and conditions of operation listed in the permit have not changed and no complaints have been filed against the operator/lessee concerning said well.

**(c)** If the well owner or operator/lessee seeks to change any of the permit terms or conditions in the renewal application, the application will be considered a new permit application subject to this Section unless:

(1) changes only include a request to:

(i) change the address of the well owner without any change in use or location of use; or

(ii) decrease the maximum authorized withdrawal.

**(d)** The District shall notify the permittee that the permit term is expiring.

### **RULE 3.210 PERMIT REVOCATION**

**(a)** A permit is not a vested right of the holder.

**(b)** After notice and an opportunity for hearing, a permit may be revoked, suspended, terminated, canceled, modified, or amended in whole or in part for cause, including but not limited to:

(1) violation of any terms or conditions of the permit;

(2) obtaining the permit by misrepresentation or failure to disclose relevant facts; or

(3) failure to comply with any applicable Rules, regulations, fee schedule, special provisions, requirements, or orders of the District.

**(c)** The permittee shall furnish to the District upon request, and within a reasonable time, any information to determine whether cause exists for revoking, suspending, terminating, canceling, modifying, or amending a permit.

## SECTION 4. PROCEDURES FOR HEARING

### RULE 4.101 OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING

(a) If an application before the District is contested, the Board will hold a hearing on the application. If an uncontested application before the District is denied by the Board without a hearing, the person denied the permit will be entitled to a hearing before the Board if a request for hearing is timely made. A written request to the Board for such a hearing, stating the pertinent facts, must be filed with the Board within fifteen (15) days of the Board action denying the permit. If such motion is in order and is duly filed, the Board shall give notice to the applicant and all proper and necessary parties of the time and place of such hearing, and shall proceed to conduct such a hearing.

### RULE 4.102 NOTICE AND SCHEDULING OF HEARINGS

(a) **Staff Recommendation:** Once an application for a permit has been declared administratively complete by the General Manager, the District Staff will perform a technical review of the application, certify the spacing of the proposed well with regard to all district spacing rules, and prepare a staff recommendation to the Board. The staff recommendation will include a summary of the facts related to the application and staff recommendations for Board action on the application.

(b) **Scheduling of Hearing:** If the General Manager determines that the permit application is contested because the application is not in compliance with all district rules or the applicant otherwise disagrees with District Staff's recommended permit, the General Manager or Board will schedule the application for a hearing at a regular or special meeting of the Board. If the General Manager determines that the permit application is uncontested and is in compliance with all district rules, then the permit may be approved by the General Manager, and the drilling operation may proceed without a full board hearing. The Board may schedule hearings for additional dates, times, and places if the hearing is to be presided over by a hearings examiner. The General Manager or Board may schedule more than one application for consideration at a hearing. Well registrations do not require a hearing or Board action.

(c) **Notice of Hearing:** The General Manager shall give notice of all hearings involving permit applications in the following manner:

- (1) Notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing shall be sent to the applicant in writing at least ten (10) days before the date of the hearing by certified mail, return

receipt requested, and other person(s) requesting notification, by regular mail, facsimile, or electronic mail. The notice to the applicant shall include the staff recommendation on the application.

(2) A copy of the notice shall be posted at the District office and at the county courthouse in the place where notices are usually posted. The date of posting may not be less than ten (10) days before the date of the hearing.

**(d) Contents of Notice:** The notice shall include:

- (1) the name of the applicant;
- (2) the location of the well or proposed well;
- (3) a brief explanation of the permit or permit amendment, including requested production, purpose of use or change of use;
- (4) the date, time, and location of the hearing; and
- (5) any other information the general manager or board deems relevant or appropriate.

#### **RULE 4.103 HEARING PROCEDURES AND CONDUCT**

**(a) General Provisions** Hearings on permit applications will be conducted by a quorum of the Board or an individual to whom the board has delegated the responsibility to preside as a hearings examiner. The board president, or another board member designated by the president, or the hearings examiner shall serve as the presiding officer for the hearing.

**(b) Hearing Registration** The District may require each person who attends a hearing to submit a hearing registration form stating the person's name, address, whom the person represents, and whether the person wishes to testify.

**(c) Conduct of Hearings** Hearings will be conducted in the manner the presiding officer deems most suitable to conveniently, inexpensively, and expeditiously provide a reasonable opportunity for interested persons to submit relevant data, views, or arguments, in writing or orally. In addition, the presiding officer may:

- (1) convene the hearing at the time and place specified in the notice;
- (2) set any necessary additional hearing dates;
- (3) establish the order for presentation of evidence;
- (4) administer oaths to all persons presenting testimony;
- (5) examine persons presenting testimony;
- (6) limit testimony or the presentation of evidence to persons who, in the presiding

officer's determination, are affected by the subject matter of the hearing;

(7) allow testimony to be submitted in writing and may require that written testimony be sworn to;

(8) ensure that information and testimony are introduced as conveniently and expeditiously as possible without prejudicing the rights of any party; and

(9) prescribe reasonable time limits for testimony and the presentation of evidence.

**(d) Continuance** The presiding officer may continue a hearing from time to time and from place to place without providing notice under Rule 4.101 by announcing at the hearing the time, date, and location of the continued hearing.

**(e) Recording** The District shall prepare and keep a record of each hearing in the form of either minutes or audio or video recording or court reporter transcription or the report described by Subsection (f) of this section. If a hearing is transcribed at the request of a party to the hearing, the presiding officer may assess the costs associated with producing the transcript to one or more parties. If a hearing involved a contested application, then the District shall keep a record of the hearing in the form of audio or video recording or a court reporter transcription.

**(f) Report** The presiding officer shall submit a report to the board no later than thirty (30) days after the date a hearing is concluded, unless the hearing was conducted by a quorum of the board. If the hearing was conducted by a quorum of the board, the presiding officer shall determine at the presiding officer's discretion whether to prepare and submit a report to the board under this section. The report must include:

(1) a summary of the subject matter of the hearing;

(2) a summary of the evidence or public comments received; and

(3) the presiding officer's recommendations for board action on the subject matter of the hearing.

#### **RULE 4.104 FINAL ORDERS OF THE BOARD**

**(a)** After the record is closed and a permitting matter is submitted to the Board, the Board may take the matter under advisement, continue it from day to day, reopen or rest the matter, refuse the action sought, grant the action sought in whole or part, or take any other appropriate action within sixty (60) days after the date of the final hearing. Unless the Board finds that an emergency exists, or that substantial injustice will result from delay, an order in a contested matter will become final twenty (20) days after the entry thereof and be binding on the parties thereto unless a motion for rehearing is filed.

(b) The orders of the Board in any non-contested application or proceeding shall become the final order of the Board on the day it is entered by the Board.

#### **RULE 4.105 REHEARING**

(a) A decision of the Board made under this Rule may be appealed by requesting a rehearing before the Board no later than twenty (20) days of the Board's decision. Such a rehearing request must be filed at the District Office in writing and must state clear and concise grounds for the request. Such a rehearing request is mandatory with respect to any decision or action of the Board before an appeal may be brought. The Board's decision is final if no request for rehearing is made within the specified time, upon the Board's denial of the request for rehearing, or upon the Board's rendering of a decision after rehearing. If the rehearing request is granted by the Board, the date of the rehearing will be within forty five (45) days thereafter unless otherwise agreed to by the parties to the proceeding. The failure of the Board to grant or deny a request for rehearing within ninety (90) days of the date of submission will be deemed to be a denial of the request.

### **SECTION 5. WELL SPACING AND PRODUCTION LIMITS**

#### **SUBSECTION 1. WELL SPACING AND WELL DENSITY**

##### **RULE 5.101 DRILLING WELLS AT UNAPPROVED LOCATIONS PROHIBITED**

(a) It is a violation of these Rules for a well owner, operator/lessee, or water well driller to drill a new well that does not comply with the spacing and location requirements of this subsection.

##### **RULE 5.102 MINIMUM SPACING OF ALL WELLS**

(a). All new wells, both exempt and non-exempt, must comply with the requirements of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality as set forth under Title 30, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 285, On-Site Sewage Facilities.

(b) No new well may be drilled closer than **three hundred thirty (330) feet** to any property line, except within the City of Sterling City.

(c). In applying this rule and in applying every special rule with relation to spacing in all the subterranean water zones and/or reservoirs underlying the confines of this District, no subdivision of



property made subsequent to the adoption of the original spacing rule (adopted August 10, 1989) will be considered in determining whether or not any property is being confiscated within the terms of such spacing rule, and no subdivision of property will be regarded in applying such spacing rule or in determining the matter of confiscation if such subdivision took place subsequent to the promulgation and adoption of the original spacing rule.

(1) Any subdivision of property creating a tract of such size and shape that it is necessary to obtain an exception to the spacing rule before a well can be drilled thereon is a voluntary subdivision and not entitled to a permit to prevent confiscation of property if it were either, (a) segregated from a larger tract in contemplation of water resource development, or (b) segregated by fee title conveyance from a larger tract after the spacing rule became effective and the voluntary subdivision rule attached.

(2) The date of attachment of the voluntary subdivision rule is the date of discovery of underground water production in a certain continuous reservoir regardless of the subsequent lateral extensions of such reservoir, provided that such rule does not attach in the case of a segregation of a small tract by fee title conveyance which is not located in an underground water production area having a discovery date prior to the date of such segregation.

(3) The date of attachment of the voluntary subdivision rule for a reservoir under any special circumstance which the Board deems sufficient to provide for an exception, may be established other than above so that innocent parties may have their rights protected.

#### **RULE 5.103 ADDITIONAL SPACING REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-EXEMPT WELLS**

(a) No non-exempt wells shall be drilled closer six hundred sixty (660) feet to any existing or proposed non-exempt well.

#### **RULE 5.104 WELL DENSITY FOR NON-EXEMPT WELLS**

(a) No more than a cumulative total of four (4) non-exempt wells, whether drilled prior to or subsequent to the enactment of this rule, shall be permitted per survey section. This rule will not be construed to require the closing, capping, or plugging of any existing well. For a section that is owned by more than one landowner, any additional wells that may be drilled on that section under this density rule will be assigned to the landowners based on the proportion of the section owned by each landowner and the number of wells already owned by each landowner on that section.

## **RULE 5.105 EXEMPTION TO WELL SPACING**

(a) If an applicant presents waivers signed by all adjoining landowner(s) and non-exempt well owners within the area affected by the application stating that they have no objections to the proposed location of a new well site, the Board may determine that the spacing requirements of Rule 5.102 will not apply to the new well location.

(b) A well used solely for domestic and livestock use will be exempted from the spacing requirements of Rule 5.102 if the tract of land owned is too small to achieve the necessary spacing, provided the well is equipped so that it is not capable of producing more than 25,000 gallons of groundwater per day.

(c) If the Board chooses to grant a permit to drill a well that does not meet the spacing requirements of Rule 5.102, the Board may monitor production of the well and may limit the production if deemed reasonable or necessary to ensure that no injury is done to adjoining landowners or well owners.

## **SUBSECTION 2. PRODUCTION LIMITS**

### **RULE 5.201 BASIS FOR PRODUCTION LIMITATIONS**

(a) The District recognizes the importance of maintaining groundwater availability for residents and spring flow. Therefore, the District follows the principle which limits groundwater availability to effective recharge or safe yield to maintain dependable and sufficient groundwater supplies for future generations. This limitation of groundwater availability is included in the District's Management Plan and Chapter 3 of the Region F Regional Water Plan, January 2006.

(b) Production shall be limited, as set forth in Rule 5.202, and to the extent necessary to ensure that the groundwater is put to a beneficial, non-wasteful use. However, in order to accomplish the purposes of Texas Water Code Chapter 36 and achieve the stated purposes and goals of the District, including managing the sustainability of the aquifers and preventing significant, sustained water-level declines within the aquifers, the Board reserves the right to amend this section in the future to establish any production limits necessary on new or existing permits. All permits are issued subject to any future production limits adopted by the District.

## **RULE 5.202 PRODUCTION LIMITS**

(a) Pending collection of additional hydrogeologic and other scientific data, production is not limited, except to the extent necessary to ensure that the groundwater is put to a beneficial, non-wasteful use. However, in order to accomplish the purposes of Texas Water Code Chapter 36, and achieve the stated purposes and goals of the District, including managing the sustainability of the aquifers, preventing significant, sustained water-level declines within the aquifers and to maintain spring flow, the Board reserves the right to amend this section in the future to establish any production limits necessary on new or existing permits. All permits are issued subject to any future production limits adopted by the District.

(b) It is the intent of the Board that a non-exempt well that was in existence prior to the effective date of this rule is not subject to the production limits set forth in Paragraph (a) above provided the purpose and place of use of the water from the well are not changed. If the purpose or place of use of the water from the well is changed, then the well will become subject to the production limits applicable to other new wells within the District. A well that is exempt from the production limits set forth in Paragraph (a) will still be limited to the extent necessary to ensure that the groundwater is put to a beneficial, non-wasteful use.

## **RULE 5.203 MODIFYING OR AMENDING MAXIMUM PRODUCTION**

(a) If the District determines that significant, sustained water-level declines are occurring within a certain geographic area of the District, the Board reserves the right to modify or amend existing permits within the area by limiting production in order to re-establish reasonably sustainable water levels in the area. The District shall provide reasonable notice and opportunity for a hearing before modifying or amending a permit.

(b) The District reserves the right to adopt production limits on new and existing wells within a particular geographic area as necessary for achieving the District's goal of sustainable water levels.

## **SECTION 6. DEPOSITS AND FEES**

### **RULE 6.101 DEPOSITS**

(a) The Board may establish by resolution a schedule of deposits.

**(b)** Each application for a permit to drill or operate a non-exempt well shall be accompanied by a deposit in the amount determined by the Board by resolution, order, or rule. The deposit shall be returned to the applicant by the District if:

- (1) the application is denied;
- (2) if the application is granted, upon receipt of all drillers' well reports and plugging reports for all wells drilled under the permit along with the completed registration form including the pump HP pump discharge size, and pump yield (GPM) for the completed well; or
- (3) if the permit location is abandoned without having been drilled, upon return and surrender of the permit marked "**Abandoned**" by the applicant.

**(c)** All deposits shall become the property of the District if the appropriate registration form, drillers' well report and/or plugging reports, or abandoned permit is not returned to the District within **six (6) months** from the approval date of the permit. Refund checks shall be void if not cashed within 90 days of issue and the deposit shall become the property of the District.

#### **RULE 6.102 ADMINISTRATIVE FEES**

**(a)** The Board may establish by resolution a schedule of administrative fees, such as fees for processing of applications and for services provided outside the District. The Board will attempt to set fees at an amount that does not unreasonably exceed the cost to the District of performing the function for which the fees are charged.

#### **RULE 6.103 WATER EXPORT FEE**

**(a)** As authorized by Texas Water Code §36.122 , as amended, entities transporting water outside of the boundaries of the District are subject to a water export fee using one of the following methods:

- (1) a fee negotiated between the District and the transporter; or
- (2) a rate not to exceed 2.5 cents per thousand gallons of water transported out of the District; or the equivalent of District's tax rate per \$100 valuation, per thousand gallons of water, which ever is greater.

## **SECTION 7. DRILLING, COMPLETING, CAPPING, AND PLUGGING**

### **SUBSECTION 1. WELL DRILLERS AND PUMP INSTALLERS**

#### **RULE 7.101 PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO DRILL WELLS AND INSTALL PUMPS**

(a) Only persons who are licensed water well drillers and/or licensed commercial pump installers, in good standing with the Department of Licensing and Regulation, Texas Water Well Drillers Board, Title 16 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 76, as amended, *or persons exempt* under Title 16 Texas Administrative Code §76.300, as amended, are allowed to either drill water wells or perform work on pumps or irrigation systems within the District.

(b) Individual landowners who are not required to be licensed may drill water wells on their property provided that:

- (1) the wells are completed according to State and District completion requirements;
- (2) well reports are completed and submitted to the District within sixty (60) days of completion of the well; and
- (3) well registration forms are properly completed and filed with the District.

#### **RULE 7.102 RESPONSIBILITY TO COVER OR CAP NEWLY DRILLED WELL**

(a) It shall be the responsibility of the driller of a newly drilled well to place a cover or cap over the boring or casing, that is not easily removable, if the well is to be left unattended without a pump installed. It shall be the responsibility of the pump installer to place a cap over the casing that is not easily removable if the well is to be left unattended with the pump removed in accordance with Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.702, as amended.

(b) Any licensed person who knowingly violates this rule, the State statutes, or the Water Well Drillers and Pump Installers rules, may be subject to an administrative penalty, reprimand, or suspension or revocation of their license by the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation or any subsequent agency with jurisdiction thereof.

#### **RULE 7.103 RESPONSIBILITY TO SUBMIT WELL REPORT AND PREREGISTRATION APPLICATION**

(a) It shall be the responsibility of the well driller to submit a copy of the completed Well Report

to the District within 60 days of completion or cessation of drilling, deepening, or otherwise altering an exempt or non-exempt well in accordance with Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.700, as amended.

(b) It shall also be the responsibility of the well driller to submit, or ensure that the landowner/lessee has submitted, a preregistration application (Notice of Intent to Drill) for approval prior to drilling any well in the District in compliance with Rule 3.102 Preregistration for all New Wells.

(c) Any licensed person who violates this rule is subject to enforcement of these rules as stated in Section 9 Enforcement.

## **SUBSECTION 2. CAPPING AND PLUGGING OF WELLS**

### **RULE 7.201 OPEN WELLS TO BE PLUGGED OR CAPPED**

(a) The District may require the owner or operator/lessee of any land within the District upon which is located any open or uncovered well to plug or cap the same as set forth below and in accordance with Texas Water Code §36.118(a) and Title 16 Texas Administrative Code §76.1004(e), as amended, except when the well is in actual use.

(b) A non-deteriorated well which contains casing in good condition and is beneficial to the owner or operator/lessee shall be closed or capped with a covering capable of preventing surface pollutants from entering the well and sustaining weight of not less than four hundred (400) pounds and constructed in such a way that the covering cannot be easily removed by hand.

(c) Officers, agents and employees of the District are authorized to serve or cause to be served notice upon any owner or operator/lessee of a well in violation of this rule, thereby requesting such owner and/or operator/lessee to close or cap such well with a covering in compliance herewith.

### **RULE 7.202 - PLUGGING OF ABANDONED OR DETERIORATED WELLS**

(a) It is the responsibility of the owner or operator/lessee of land to plug or have plugged a well that is deteriorated or abandoned in accordance with Title 16 Texas Administrative Code, Water Well Drillers and Water Well Pump Installers §76.1004, as amended.

(b) A well that does not penetrate any undesirable water zone(s) and is deteriorated or abandoned shall be plugged in accordance with the following specifications:

- (1) all removable casing shall be removed from the well;
- (2) any existing surface completion shall be removed;
- (3) the entire well shall be pressure filled via a tremie pipe with cement from the bottom up to the surface;
- (4) in lieu of the procedure in (b)(3) of this section, the well shall be pressure filled via a tremie tube with clean bentonite grout of a minimum 9.1 pounds per gallon weight followed by a cement plug extending from the land surface to a depth of not less than two (2) feet, or if the well to be plugged has one hundred 100 feet or less of standing water the entire well may be filled with a solid column of 3/8 inch or larger granular sodium bentonite hydrated at frequent intervals while strictly adhering to the manufacturers' recommended rate and method of application. If a bentonite grout is used, the entire well from not less than two (2) feet below land surface may be filled with the bentonite grout. The top two (2) feet above any bentonite grout or granular sodium bentonite shall be filled with cement as an atmospheric barrier.

(c) A well that does penetrate any undesirable water zone(s) and is deteriorated or abandoned shall be plugged as in (b) above with the following additional specification:

- (1) Undesirable water or constituents shall be isolated from the fresh water zone(s) with cement plugs and the remainder of the wellbore filled with neat cement or clean bentonite grout of a minimum 9.1 pounds per gallon weight followed by a cement plug extending from land surface to a depth of not less than two (2) feet.

(d) Officers, agents and employees of the District are authorized to serve or cause to be served notice upon any owner or operator of a well in violation of this rule, thereby requesting such owner and/or operator/lessee to plug such well permanently with a covering in compliance herewith.

#### **RULE 7.203 FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH CAPPING OR PLUGGING RULES**

(a) In the event any owner or operator/lessee fails or refuses to comply with the request to either close, cap or plug a well(s) within thirty (30) days, a written notice shall be delivered to the owner or operator/lessee of said well(s) either by certified mail or by priority mail with confirmation of delivery requesting compliance with the rule within ten (10) days of receipt of the written notice.

(b) If, after the ten (10) day period, an inspection of the well or wells reveals that the owner or operator/lessee has not complied with the request or refuses to close, cap or plug a well, any employee, person, firm, or corporation employed by the District may go upon said land, as authorized by Texas

Water Code §36.118(c), as amended, and close, cap or plug said well safely and securely, in accordance with this section and Title 16 Texas Administrative Code, Water Well Drillers and Water Well Pump Installers §76.1004, as amended.

#### **RULE 7.204 LIEN FOR RECOVERY OF EXPENSES INCURRED BY THE DISTRICT**

(a) Reasonable expenses incurred by the District in closing, capping, or plugging a well pursuant to Texas Water Code §36.118 (d) and (e), as amended, constitute a lien on the land on which the well is located.

(b) The District shall perfect the lien by filing in the Sterling County Official Public Records an affidavit, executed by any person conversant with the facts, stating the following:

- (1) the existence of the well;
- (2) the legal description of the property on which the well is located;
- (3) the approximate location of the well on the property;
- (4) the failure or refusal of the owner or operator/lessee, after notification, to close, cap or plug the well within ten (10) days after the notification;
- (5) the closing, capping or plugging of the well by the District, or by an authorized agent, representative, or employee of the District; and
- (6) the expense incurred by the District in closing, capping or plugging the well.

### **SUBSECTION 3. STANDARDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **RULE 7.301 WELL DRILLING, COMPLETION, CAPPING AND PLUGGING**

(a) **Location and Standards of Completion for Wells.** New wells shall be located (spaced) and completed in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 Well Spacing and Production Limits of these rules and the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.1000, Locations and Standards of Completion for Wells, as amended.

(b) **Responsibilities of the Well Driller and Owner/Operator/Lessee** All well drillers, landowners, or operator/lessees drilling their own wells, and persons having a well drilled, deepened, or altered shall adhere to the provisions of these Rules and Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.702, Responsibilities of the Licensee and



Landowner--Well Drilling, Completion, Capping and Plugging, as amended.

**(c) Reporting Undesirable Water or Constituents.** All well drillers, landowners, or operator/lessees drilling their own wells shall adhere to the provisions of these Rules and Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.701 Responsibilities of the Licensee-Reporting Undesirable Water or Constituents, as amended.

**(d) Standards of Completion for Water Wells Encountering Undesirable Water or Constituents.** If a water well driller, landowner or operator/lessee drilling his/her own well, knowingly encounters undesirable water or constituents and the well is not plugged or made into a completed monitoring well, the driller, landowner or operator/lessee shall complete the well in accordance with Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.1001, Technical Requirements-Standards of Completion for Water Wells Encountering Undesirable Water or Constituents, as amended.

**(e) Standards for Wells Producing Undesirable Water or Constituents.** Wells completed to produce undesirable water shall be completed in accordance with these Rules and Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.1002, Technical Requirements-Standards for Wells Producing Undesirable Water or Constituents, as amended.

**(f) Re-completions.** The landowner or operator/lessee shall have the continuing responsibility of insuring the integrity of the well in accordance with these Rules and Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.1003, Technical Requirements-Re-completions, as amended.

**(g) Standards for Capping and Plugging of Wells and Plugging Wells that Penetrate Undesirable Water or Constituent Zones.** Wells must be capped and plugged in accordance with these Rules and Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.1004, Technical Requirements-Standards for Capping and Plugging of Wells and Plugging Wells that Penetrate Undesirable Water or Constituent Zones, as amended.

**(h) Standards for Water Wells (drilled before June 1, 1983).** Wells drilled prior to June 1, 1983, unless abandoned, shall be grandfathered without further modification unless the well is found to be a threat to public health and safety or to water quality as described in the provisions of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Title 16, Texas Administrative Code §76.1005, Technical Requirements-Standards for Water Wells (drilled before June 1, 1983), as amended. Wells found to be a threat to public health and safety or water quality shall be modified in accordance with completion, capping, or plugging standards as provided for in these Rules and Department of Licensing and

## **SECTION 8. CONSERVATION AND DROUGHT**

### **SUBSECTION 1. WATER CONSERVATION**

#### **RULE 8.101 CONSERVATION POLICY**

(a) The District may implement conservation policies through various programs initiatives and incentives including but not limited to public education, technical assistance, special programs, through grants and loans from support by various local, state, and federal programs, industries, foundations, non-profits, public and private individuals, corporations, partnerships, and other interest groups that will further the District's goals of cost-effective water conservation, pollution prevention, and waste prevention.

(b) Each permittee and operator of an exempt well shall endeavor to utilize practices, techniques, and technologies to reduce the consumption of water, reduce loss or waste of water, improve the efficiency in the use of water, or increase the recycling and reuse of water so that sufficient water is available for future use.

#### **RULE 8.102 WATER CONSERVATION PLANS**

(a) Each permittee who is required to prepare, adopt, and implement a water conservation plan by another agency or political subdivision of the State of Texas shall submit a copy of that plan to the District for the District's files in order to assist the District in monitoring the success of water conservation efforts within the District.

### **SUBSECTION 2. DROUGHT**

#### **RULE 8.201 DROUGHT CONDITION**

(a) The District shall monitor drought and its specific stages according to the Palmer Drought Severity Index as published by the Texas Water Development Board or similar agency. The index ranges from 4 (Extremely Wet) to -4 (Extreme Drought) and takes into account hydrologic factors such

as recent precipitation, evaporation, and soil moisture. When the index indicates that the District will experience severe drought conditions, the District will notify all public water suppliers within the District.

#### **RULE 8.202 DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLANS**

(a) Each permittee who is required by another agency or political subdivision of the State of Texas to maintain a drought management plan shall submit a copy of the plan to the District for the District's files in order to assist the District in monitoring the success of drought management efforts within the District.

### **SECTION 9. AQUIFER STORAGE AND RECOVERY AND RECHARGE FACILITIES**

#### **SUBSECTION 1. AQUIFER STORAGE AND RECOVERY PROJECTS**

##### **RULE 9.101 PERMIT REQUIRED**

(a) No injection well may be drilled in any applicable aquifer for the purpose of storing surface water or groundwater without first obtaining a permit from the District.

(b) The permit may be for any term proscribed by the Board and may be renewed at the end of the term.

(c) The permit will be processed in accordance with these Rules.

##### **RULE 9.102 PERMIT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

(a) Permit application(s) shall include information required under Rule 3.204.

(b) Additional information requirements shall include:

(1) all information required for an application for a Class V injection well before the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;

(2) a map or plat showing the injection facility and the aquifer in which the water will be stored; and

(3) a map or plat showing the location of all water wells completed to the same aquifer

within a five-mile radius of the proposed injection site.

### **RULE 9.103 PERMIT CONDITIONS**

(a) The Board shall consider the following permit conditions

(1) whether the introduction of water into the aquifer will alter the physical, chemical, or biological quality of native groundwater to a degree that would render the groundwater produced from the aquifer harmful or detrimental to people, animals, vegetation, or property, or require treatment prior to beneficial use;

(2) whether the water stored can be successfully harvested without causing undue hardship to the aquifer or any user thereof;

(3) the location and depth of the aquifer in which the stored water will be located;

(4) the nature and extent of the surface development and activity above the stored water;

and

(5) the ability of the permittee to determine the compatibility of the stored water with the resident water and monitor the impact on the receiving aquifer.

(b) The Board may include any permit conditions necessary to ensure the safety, quality, and quantity of groundwater available for withdrawal by other well owners.

(c) Violation of any permit condition may result in cancellation of the permit, civil penalties, or both.

### **SUBSECTION 2 RECHARGE FACILITIES**

#### **RULE 9.201 PERMIT REQUIRED**

(a) No recharge facility may be installed and/or operated without first obtaining a permit from the District.

#### **RULE 9.202 PERMIT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

(a) Permit application(s) shall include the following information:

(1) the name and address of the applicant;

(2) the name and address of the fee owner(s) of the land upon which the recharged

facility will be located;

(3) the legal description of the exact proposed location of the recharge facility;

(4) the time schedule for construction and/or operation of the facility;

proposed (5) the names and addresses of the property owners within one-half (1/2) mile of the recharge facility location, and the location of any wells on those properties;

information (6) a complete construction and operations plan that will include, but is not limited to, as to:

(i) a technical description of the facility to be used for recharge;

(ii) the source of the water to be recharged;

(iii) the quality of the water to be recharged;

(iv) the volume of water to be recharged;

(v) the rate at which the water will be recharged; and

(vi) the formation into which water will be recharged;

(7) scientific evidence showing that the proposed operation will not:

water; (i) endanger the structural characteristics of the formation receiving the recharged

(ii) cause pollution; or

(iii) cause waste; and

(8) any additional information that may be required by the Board.

### **RULE 9.203 PERMIT CONDITIONS**

**(a)** The Board shall consider the following permit conditions

(1) whether the introduction of water into the aquifer will alter the physical, chemical, or biological quality of native groundwater to a degree that would render the groundwater produced from the aquifer harmful or detrimental to people, animals, vegetation, or property, or require treatment prior to beneficial use;

the (2) whether the water can be successfully harvested without causing undue hardship to the aquifer or any user thereof;

(3) the location and depth of the aquifer; and

(4) the ability of the permittee to determine the compatibility of the recharge water with the resident water and monitor the impact on the aquifer.

**(b)** The Board may include any permit conditions necessary to ensure the safety, quality, and

quantity of groundwater available for withdrawal by other well owners.

(c) Violation of any permit condition may result in cancellation of the permit, civil penalties, or both.

## **SECTION 10. ENFORCEMENT**

### **RULE 10.101 NOTICE AND ACCESS TO INSPECT AND TEST WELLS**

(a) Pursuant to Texas Water Code §36.123, as amended, the District's officers, employees, agents, or representatives shall have the right at all reasonable times to enter upon property on which a well or wells may be located within the boundaries of the District, to:

- (1) inspect and test such well or wells;
- (2) make any other reasonable and necessary inspections and tests that may be required or necessary for the enforcement of the Rules of the District.

(b) Prior to entering upon property the District shall notify the landowner/lessee in writing or by telephone. Notice is not required if prior permission has been granted to enter without notice.

### **RULE 10.102 ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS**

(a) Pursuant to Texas Water Code §36.102, as amended, the Board may enforce Texas Water Code Chapter 36, as amended, and these Rules by injunction, mandatory injunction, or other appropriate remedy in a court of competent jurisdiction and seek reasonable civil penalties for violation of any rule of the District.

(b) The penalties shall not exceed \$10,000 per day per violation, and each day of a continuing violation constitutes a separate violation.

(c) A penalty under this section is in addition to any other penalty provided by the law of this state and may be enforced by complaints filed in the appropriate court of jurisdiction in the county in which the District's principal office or meeting place is located.

(d) If the District prevails in any suit to enforce its rules, the district may seek and the court shall grant, in the same action, recovery for attorney's fees, costs for expert witnesses, and other costs incurred by the District before the court. The amount of the attorney's fees shall be fixed by the court.