

15A NCAC 05H .1616 WELL-CONTROL AND BLOWOUT PREVENTION

(a) During drilling, all oil or gas wells shall be equipped with a well-control system that includes a blowout preventer (BOP). The well-control system shall meet the following requirements:

- (1) be functional at all times and tested to working pressures at least 50 percent above the hydrostatic pressures anticipated in the oil or gas well;
- (2) BOP equipment shall be in compliance with API Standard 53 "Blowout Prevention Equipment Systems for Drilling Wells," which is incorporated by reference, including subsequent amendments and editions. This document may be viewed online for no charge at <http://publications.api.org/>;
- (3) the BOP shall be installed and tested as required in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule prior to drilling the surface-casing cement plug. The BOP shall be retested as required in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule prior to drilling the cement plug in each subsequent casing string; and
- (4) during drilling operations, the shear-ram BOP shall be tested by closing the BOP at least once weekly in open hole conditions. The annular BOP shall be tested by closing on the drill pipe at least once each week.

(b) The permittee shall notify the Department via telephone or email at least 48 hours prior to testing the BOP. The contact information is set forth in Rule .0201 of this Subchapter. Test results shall be posted at the well site for review and available to the Department on request. The permittee shall submit Form 11 – Required Notifications to the Department, by mail, email, or fax within five calendar days of the telephone or email notice and shall include the following information:

- (1) the permittee's name, address, telephone number, fax number, and email address;
- (2) the county and nearest city or town where the oil or gas well is located;
- (3) the property street address, or nearest address to the ingress and egress point leading from a public road to the well pad;
- (4) the API number, the lease name, and the oil or gas well name and number; and
- (5) the scheduled date and approximate time for the BOP test.

(c) The quantity of drilling fluid of sufficient weight to maintain well control shall be located on the well site during drilling operations.

(d) If drilling with mud, the drilling-fluid system shall be designed to maintain control of the oil or gas well to minimize the potential of a hydrostatic pressure surge when the drilling assembly is inserted into or removed from the wellbore.

(e) A diverter system shall be installed while drilling the surface casing wellbore in geographic areas that have not yet been drilled, unless the requirement is waived by the Department based on prior drilling data that confirms shallow gas and other drilling hazards are not present.

(f) If drilling with air or drilling into formations where the expected reservoir pressure, as determined by the permittee, exceeds the weight of the drilling fluid column, a diverter system shall be installed to divert any wellbore fluids away from the rig floor to a pit or tank at least 80 feet from the wellbore.

(g) All diverter systems shall be maintained in working condition and shall be function tested when installed and at regular intervals during drilling operations. There must be two diverter control stations, one on the drilling floor and one located at a safe distance from the drilling operations. No well shall continue drilling operations if a test or other information indicates the diverter system is unable to function or operate as designed.

(h) The permittee shall have an individual certified from an accredited well control training program, such as the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC) WellCAP, onsite during the drilling and completion of an oil or gas well.

(i) A wellhead shall be installed after drilling operations are complete and the BOP has been removed.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113-391(a)(5)i;
Eff. March 17, 2015.*