Requirements for the Construction of Structures Adjacent to Oil Well(s)

Guideline C- 02

Date: January 1, 2011
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PURPOSE

Structures located adjacent to oil wells can be negatively impacted by un-expected emergencies and the natural products they produce. The intent of this guideline is to provide plan review processing requirements and to assist with the design of alternative construction materials for structures proposed less than the distances required by the 2013 California Fire Code (CFC).

SCOPE

The CFC prohibits the construction of any building within 100 feet from an oil well, except for buildings required to operate the well (CFC 5706.1.2). The requirements in this document shall apply to any structure with a proposed setback of less than what is required by the CFC. The drilling of new wells is prohibited within 300 feet from certain occupancy groups (CFC 5706.1.2).

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Each site shall be evaluated on an individual basis. A site plan is required to be submitted to the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) showing:

- A minimum of two existing or proposed fire hydrants and all roads surrounding the proposed structure and oil well(s);
- The occupancy group uses of the building from the 2013 California Building Code (CBC);
- The location of all oil wells within 200 feet from the footprint of the proposed structure(s);
- Acceptable notes indicating site specific conditions and compliance with the above requirements can also be included on the site plan.

For approval of an alternative structure location:

If proposing a structure setback less than the distance required by the CFC, use the pre-approved alternative package design from the following section. If using the pre-approved alternative package, there shall be no case in which a structure will be approved closer than 50 feet to an oil well and structures with assembly, educational and institutional occupancy groups will not be approved closer than 150 feet to an oil well. Follow the process outlined in the following section to submit an alternative materials and methods request. Approval letters shall be ultimately be copied on the plans for final approval of the project by OCFA.
Request for Alternative Materials and Methods Design:

The CFC allows an alternative materials and methods request when the minimum code requirements cannot be met or site specific conditions exist that prevent code compliance. It is the responsibility of the applicant to propose compensating factors as an equivalency to the originally required codes. If the intent of the code and an equivalent level of protection is achieved, the OCFA will grant approval (CFC Chapter 1 Appendix, 104.9).

To utilize this alternative materials and methods request process, a letter of application for each site shall be submitted to the OCFA for review and approval. Refer to the OCFA Guideline A-01 for a sample draft letter and design your request letter as directed. If the request is approved, the OCFA will provide a response letter. Both letters shall be copied on the plans.

Pre-approved alternative package:
The following is a pre-approved alternative package for a structure setback distance from of an oil well, which is less than required by the CFC. The alternative proposal will be approved when providing all of the following alternative package design criteria on the site plan and in the alternative materials and methods request letter:

1. An automatic fire sprinkler system throughout the entire structure. This includes the attic, closets and bathrooms.
2. An 8’ high block wall on the property line(s) facing the well.
3. Class A roof covering and assembly, with eaves protection designed as required in the 2010 California Building Code, Chapter 7A.
4. No skylights will be approved.
5. The exterior structure walls that are in the line-of-sight to the well(s) shall be of a 2-hour fire resistive construction with no openings. This applies to all structures that have setbacks less that the distance required by the CFC.