

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
POLLUTION CONTROL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE**

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Overview

16.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter establishes policy for operating Class V Underground Injection Control (UIC) wells on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)-managed lands and facilities.

16.2 What is a Class V UIC well? A Class V UIC well is a system used to inject nonhazardous fluids underground either into or above underground sources of drinking water. UIC well types range from simple shallow wells (e.g., dry wells, cesspools, and septic system leach fields) to complex experimental injection technologies. See Table 16-1.

Table 16-1: Common Class V UIC Well Types	
These well types...	Inject/drain nonhazardous fluids into the subsurface by...
A. Agricultural Drainage	Receiving excess surface water from agricultural fields, including irrigation tail-waters and natural drainage resulting from precipitation, snow melt, floodwater, etc. They also may receive animal yard runoff, feedlot runoff, dairy runoff, or runoff from other agricultural operations. Agricultural drainage wells include improved sinkholes, abandoned drinking water wells, and underground drain tiles and cisterns.
B. Aquaculture	Accumulating wastewater and sludge that requires removal by draining or injection to the subsurface.
C. Aquifer Recharge and Aquifer Storage & Recovery (ASR)	Replenishing water in an aquifer for subsequent use. While an aquifer recharge well is used only to replenish the water in an aquifer, ASR wells are used to achieve two objectives: (1) Storing water in the ground, and

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Table 16-1: Common Class V UIC Well Types	
These well types...	Inject/drain nonhazardous fluids into the subsurface by...
	<p>(2) Recovering the stored water (from the same well) for a beneficial use.</p> <p>Both of these types of wells may have secondary objectives, such as the control of subsidence (i.e., sinking land) and prevention of salt water intrusion into fresh water aquifers.</p>
D. Aquifer Remediation	<p>Cleaning, treating, or preventing contamination of ground water. These wells may be associated with Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) cleanup projects. Although we must comply with the substantive requirements of the applicable laws and regulations for on-site response activities conducted under our CERCLA authority, we do not have to comply with administration requirements, such as obtaining a permit.</p>
E. Car Wash Areas	<p>Disposing of wash water from only the exterior of vehicles (sometimes called “wand washes”) through a drain that leads to a dry well or septic system. These wells are typically located at manual car washes where people use handheld hoses to wash vehicles.</p>
F. Large-Capacity Septic Systems (LCSS)	<p>Disposing of sanitary waste through a septic tank. LCSSs are used by multiple dwellings, business establishments, and communities. Systems serving single families and non-residential systems serving fewer than 20 people are not included. See section 16.10 for how to apply the definition of an LCSS.</p>
G. Laundromats without Dry Cleaning Facilities	<p>Injecting fluids from laundromats where no on-site dry cleaning is performed or organic solvents used.</p>
H. Noncontact Cooling Water	<p>Injecting noncontact cooling water that does not have additives and has not been chemically altered. Typically, noncontact cooling water is water used in a cooling system designed to separate the water from any chemicals.</p>
I. Salt Water Intrusion Barrier	<p>Injecting water into a fresh water aquifer to prevent the intrusion of salt water. Typically untreated surface water, untreated ground water, saline water, or surface water treated to drinking water standards is injected into the subsurface.</p>
J. Sewage Treatment Effluent	<p>Disposing of treated effluent from a facility that receives only sanitary waste. These types of UIC wells are commonly used in areas where injection will aid in aquifer recharge, subsidence control, or to prevent saltwater intrusion.</p>
K. Storm Water Drainage	<p>Removing storm water or urban runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roadways, roofs, and paved surfaces to prevent flooding, infiltration into basements, etc. The primary types of storm water drainage wells are bored wells, dug wells, and improved sinkholes.</p>
L. Subsidence	<p>Controlling land sinking because of ground water withdrawal and</p>

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Table 16-1: Common Class V UIC Well Types	
These well types...	Inject/drain nonhazardous fluids into the subsurface by...
Control	other activities.

16.3 What is the Service’s policy on operation of Class V UIC wells? Ground water serves as the drinking water source for approximately 50 percent of Americans. Any substances injected into the subsurface can potentially contaminate underground sources of drinking water, particularly if an injection well is not properly managed. Because contamination of ground water can be difficult to remediate, it is important to ensure that we do not inject contaminants. Our policy is to protect underground sources of drinking water by operating all Class V UIC wells in compliance with applicable Federal, State, tribal, local, and Service-specific Class V UIC well requirements (see section 16.8).

16.4 What is the scope of this chapter? This policy applies to any Service-managed land or facility that operates a Class V UIC well.

16.5 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?

A. Authorized regulatory authority: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or a State that EPA has granted the authority to oversee UIC activities (see section 16.9 for a list of States with authorized regulatory authority).

B. Nonhazardous fluids: Any material or substance that flows or moves and does not cause harm to human health or the environment.

C. Underground source of drinking water: An underground geological formation or group of formations containing water, also known as an aquifer, or portion of an aquifer that:

(1) Supplies a public water system or that contains a sufficient quantity of ground water to supply a public water system,

(2) Supplies drinking water for human consumption, and

(3) Contains fewer than 10,000 milligrams per liter of dissolved solids and is not an exempted aquifer.

16.6 What are the authorities for this chapter?

A. Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq., as amended).

B. Department of the Interior [Environmental Compliance Memorandum No. 15-2](#), Departmental Guidance on Class V Underground Injection Control Wells, March 19, 2015.

Responsibilities

16.7 Who is responsible for Class V UIC wells? See Table 16-2.

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Table 16-2: Responsibilities for Class V UIC Wells	
These employees...	Are responsible for...
A. The Director	Approving or declining to approve Servicewide policy.
B. Regional Directors	Ensuring that the facilities in their Regions fully implement the requirements for Class V UIC wells, including Federal, State, tribal, and local regulations and requirements.
C. The Assistant Director – Business Management and Operations	Ensuring that a program is in place to oversee the management of Class V UIC well compliance.
D. The Chief, Division of Engineering (DEN)	<p>(1) Developing policy for Class V UIC well compliance,</p> <p>(2) Providing guidance and technical assistance to the Regional Engineers and Regional Environmental Compliance Coordinators as they implement the Class V UIC well regulations, and</p> <p>(3) Anticipating and evaluating the effects of new and proposed regulations on our facilities and the requirements to keep them in compliance.</p>
E. Regional Engineers/Regional Environmental Compliance Coordinators (RENs/RECCs)	<p>(1) Providing technical assistance to Project Leaders/Facility Managers to ensure that Class V UIC well requirements are met;</p> <p>(2) Coordinating and assisting in budgeting, design, and construction contracting for compliance with Class V UIC well regulations, as required;</p> <p>(3) Assisting Project Leaders/Facility Managers to prepare and submit Class V UIC well inventory forms;</p> <p>(4) Notifying the DEN at Headquarters when a facility is in violation or noncompliant with the terms of a permit;</p> <p>(5) Assisting Project Leaders/Facility Managers to return non-compliant facilities to compliance; and</p> <p>(6) Assisting Project Leaders/Facility Managers to find funding to keep facilities in compliance.</p>
F. Project Leaders/Facility Managers	<p>(1) Identifying the regulatory authority with jurisdiction over their location;</p> <p>(2) Ensuring the Class V UIC well requirements are met at their location;</p> <p>(3) Preparing and submitting Class V UIC well inventory forms, if applicable;</p>

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Table 16-2: Responsibilities for Class V UIC Wells	
These employees...	Are responsible for...
	<p>(4) Notifying the RECC when a facility is in violation or noncompliant with the terms of a permit; and</p> <p>(5) Updating Class V UIC well information in the Service’s online Environmental Compliance Checklist prior to an environmental compliance audit.</p>

Managing Class V UIC Wells

16.8 What are the requirements for Class V UIC wells? If you plan to construct a new Class V UIC well, or you already have one at your site, you must comply with the following requirements:

A. Submit inventory information to the appropriate regulatory authority (see Table 16-3) and verify that you are allowed to use the well. The regulatory authority will review the information to be sure that the well will not endanger an underground source of drinking water.

B. Operate the well in a way that does not endanger underground sources of drinking water. The regulatory authority will explain any specific requirements.

C. When you are no longer using a Class V well, properly close it in a way that prevents movement of any contaminated fluids into underground sources of drinking water.

16.9 Who is the regulatory authority? EPA designed the UIC regulations so that States, territories, and tribes could adopt them. EPA has granted many State agencies the authority to oversee Class V UIC well activities. If a State has not obtained authority, EPA implements the program (see Table 16-3 below).

Table 16-3: Class V UIC Well Regulatory Authority by U.S. States and Territories	
This Regulatory Authority...	Is responsible for implementing the Class V UIC Well Program for...
A. EPA	Alaska, American Samoa, any Indian Country, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New York, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, the Virgin Islands, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.
B. State Agency	Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, North Carolina, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

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16.10 How does a Project Leader/Facility Manager know if he/she is operating a Large Capacity Septic System (LCSS)? Administrative buildings with a capacity of 20 or more people and visitor centers are LCSSs when they are served by septic systems or tank-and-leach field systems. Other commercial buildings with septic systems designed to serve 20 or more people are also LCSSs. Contact your [RECC](#) with questions about making this determination.

16.11 What inventory information is required? The information you need to submit to the regulatory authority varies depending on the State where the well is located. In general, EPA and most States require that you provide the following basic information (see, EPA "Inventory of Injection Wells" [form 7520-16](#)):

- A. The name and location of the facility,
- B. The name and address of a legal contact,
- C. Property owner,
- D. Nature and type of injection well(s), and
- E. Operating status of injection well(s).

16.12 What happens after a facility submits the inventory information? Based on the information on the inventory form, the regulatory authority will do one of the following:

A. Determine that you are authorized to inject. If you meet the requirements, the regulatory authority gives you permission to use the well. The authorization expires when the well is properly closed.

B. Request additional information. The UIC program director may need additional information to determine if the well might endanger an underground source of drinking water. If so, he/she will send you a letter explaining what information is needed and why they are asking for it.

C. Require you to obtain a permit. If the UIC program director is concerned that your well may endanger an underground source of drinking water, you may have to obtain a permit. The permit:

(1) Will include specific conditions you must meet, and

(2) May require you to monitor the fluids that go into the well, implement best management practices, and report specific information to the regulatory authority on a particular schedule.

D. Require you to close the well. If the UIC program director determines that your well is endangering an underground source of drinking water, you must close the well.

16.13 How does a Project Leader/Facility Manager close a well? You must close the well in a way that prevents any contaminated fluids from moving into underground sources of drinking water during or after closure. When closing the well you must:

- A. Permanently plug or otherwise close it to protect drinking water;

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- B.** Dispose of or manage any soil, gravel, sludge, liquids, or other materials from or near your well according to all Federal, State, and local requirements; and
- C.** Follow any other well closure requirements included in your State or EPA UIC program. Contact the appropriate regulatory authority to determine the best method for closing your well.

/sgd/ Stephen Guertin
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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