

Glossary of Terms

Abandoned Well

An abandoned oil well, as defined by the CA Public Resources Code, specifically Section 3208, is a well that has been properly plugged and abandoned. This means all necessary steps have been taken to isolate oil or gas-bearing strata, protect groundwater, and prevent further damage to life, health, property, and resources. A well is considered "properly abandoned" when it is sealed and closed, preventing the movement of fluids and gases. (State)

Desertion (Idle-Deserted)

Desertion is the cessation of petroleum operations at a drill site without compliance with the provisions of this [chapter 25](#), relating to suspended operations or abandonment. (County)

Idle Well

County Definition

Any well that has not produced oil or natural gas or has not been used for injection for six consecutive months of continuous operation during the last five or more years. An idle well does not include an active observation well.

State Definition

Any well that for a period of 24 consecutive months has not either produced oil or natural gas, produced water to be used in production stimulation, or been used for enhanced oil recovery, reservoir pressure management, or injection. For the purpose of determining whether a well is an idle well, production or injection is subject to verification by the division." (Pub. Resources Code, § 3008, subd. (d).)

Long-Term Idle Well

County Definition

Any well that has not produced oil or natural gas or has not been used for injection for six consecutive months of continuous operation during the last ten or more years. A long-term idle well does not include an active observation well.

State Definition

Any well that has been an idle well for eight or more years." (Pub. Resources Code, § 3008, subd. (e).)

Orphaned

An "orphaned well" is generally understood as a well, primarily an oil or gas well, that has been abandoned and for which no responsible or solvent operator can be identified to properly plug and abandon it. These wells are a subset of [abandoned wells](#), leaving the state responsible for their proper abandonment. (State)

Plugged & Abandoned

A well that has been rendered unusable through compliance with the procedures outlined in [section 25-31](#) of this (County) Code, or a well that is considered "plugged and abandoned" by the DOGGR (Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources, now known as CalGEM) as evidence by the issuance of a report of well abandonment. (County)