

and reclamation requirements before we approve the exploration permit.

(b) These regulations do not apply to:

- (1) Unleased land administered by another Federal agency;
- (2) Unleased geothermal resources whose surface land is managed by another Federal agency;
- (3) Privately owned land; or
- (4) Casual use activities.

§ 3250.11 What types of operations may I propose when I send BLM my exploration permit application?

(a) You may propose any activity fitting the definition of “exploration operations” in 43 CFR 3200.1. Submit Form 3200-9, Notice of Intent to Conduct Geothermal Resource Exploration Operations, together with the information required under 43 CFR 3251.12, and BLM will review your proposal.

(b) The exploration operations regulations do not address drilling wells intended for production or injection, which are covered in subpart 3260 of this part, or geothermal resources utilization, which is covered in subpart 3270 of this part.

§ 3250.12 What general standards apply to my exploration operations?

Your exploration operations must:

- (a) Meet all operational and environmental standards;
- (b) Protect public health, safety and property;
- (c) Prevent unnecessary impacts to surface and subsurface resources; and
- (d) Be conducted in a manner consistent with the principles of multiple use; and
- (e) Comply with the requirements of 43 CFR 3200.4.

§ 3250.13 What orders or instructions may BLM issue me?

(a) Geothermal resource operational orders, for detailed requirements that apply nationwide;

(b) Notices to lessees, for detailed requirements on a statewide or regional basis;

(c) Other orders and instructions specific to a field or area;

(d) Permit conditions of approval; and

(e) Verbal orders which will be confirmed in writing.

Subpart 3251—Exploration Operations: Getting a Permit

§ 3251.10 Do I need a permit before I start my exploration operations?

Yes, do not start any exploration operations before we have approved your exploration permit.

§ 3251.11 May I conduct exploration operations on my lease, someone else’s lease or unleased land?

You may request a permit to explore any BLM-managed public lands open to geothermal leasing, even if we already leased the lands to another person. Your exploration will not give you exclusive rights. If you wish to conduct operations on your lease, you may do so after we have approved your exploration permit. If the lands are already leased, your operations may not unreasonably interfere with or endanger those other operations or other authorized uses, or cause unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands.

§ 3251.12 What does BLM need to approve my exploration permit?

To conduct exploration operations on BLM-managed lands, your application must:

(a) Include a complete and signed exploration permit which describes the lands you wish to explore;

(b) For operations other than temperature gradient wells, describe your exploration plans and procedures, including the approximate starting and ending dates for each phase of operations;

(c) For temperature gradient wells, describe your drilling and completion procedures, and include, for each well or for several wells you propose to drill in an area of geologic and environmental similarity:

(1) A detailed description of the equipment, materials, and procedures you will use;

(2) The depth of the well;

(3) The casing and cementing program;

(4) The circulation media (mud, air, foam, etc.);

(5) A description of the logs that you will run;

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(6) A description and diagram of the blowout prevention equipment you will use during each phase of drilling;

(7) The expected depth and thickness of fresh water zones;

(8) Anticipated lost circulation zones;

(9) Anticipated temperature gradient in the area;

(10) Well site layout and design;

(11) Existing and planned access roads or ancillary facilities; and

(12) Source of drill pad and road building material and water supply.

(d) Show evidence of bond coverage (See 43 CFR 3251.15);

(e) Estimate how much surface disturbance your exploration may cause;

(f) Describe the proposed measures you will take to protect the environment and other resources;

(g) Describe methods to reclaim the surface; and

(h) Include all other information we may require.

§ 3251.13 What action will BLM take on my permit?

(a) When we receive your exploration permit, we will make sure it is complete and signed, and review it for compliance with the requirements of 43 CFR 3200.4.

(b) If the proposed operations are located on lands described under 43 CFR 3250.10(a)(2), we will consult with the federal surface management agency before we approve your permit.

(c) We will check your exploration permit for technical adequacy and we may require additional procedures.

(d) We will notify you if we need more information to process your permit. We will suspend the review of your permit until we receive the information.

(e) After our review, we will notify you whether we approved or denied your permit, as well as any conditions we require for conducting operations.

§ 3251.14 Once I have a permit, how can I change my exploration operations?

Send BLM a complete and signed sundry notice, form 3260-3, which fully describes the requested changes. Do not proceed with the change until you receive written approval from BLM.

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§ 3251.15 Do I need a bond for conducting exploration operations?

Yes, do not start any exploration operations on BLM-managed lands until we approve your bond. You may meet the requirement for an exploration bond in two ways.

(a) If you have an existing nationwide or statewide oil and gas exploration bond, provide a rider to include geothermal resources exploration operations, in an amount we have specified.

(b) If you must file a new bond, the minimum amounts are:

(1) \$5,000 for a single operation;

(2) \$25,000 for all of your operations within a state;

(3) \$50,000 for all of your operations nationwide.

(c) See 43 CFR subparts 3214 and 3215 for additional details on bonding procedures.

§ 3251.16 When will BLM release my bond?

We will release your bond after you request it and we determine that you have:

(a) Plugged and abandoned all wells;

(b) Reclaimed the land; and

(c) Complied with the requirements of 43 CFR 3200.4.

Subpart 3252—Conducting Exploration Operations

§ 3252.10 What operational standards apply to my exploration operations?

You must:

(a) Keep exploration operations under control at all times;

(b) Conduct training during your operation which ensures your personnel are capable of performing emergency procedures quickly and effectively;

(c) Use properly maintained equipment; and

(d) Use operational practices which allow for quick and effective emergency response.

§ 3252.11 What environmental requirements must I meet when conducting exploration operations?

(a) You must conduct your exploration operations to: