

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
HEARINGS SECTION**

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 10-0271500

ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY TOM D. HORN, SOLE PROPRIETOR (400215), AS TO THE C.L. CULVER (096941) LEASE, WELL NO. 2, PANHANDLE, WEST FIELD, CARSON COUNTY, TEXAS

FINAL ORDER

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on May 9, 2013, and that the respondent, Tom D. Horn, Sole Proprietor (400215), failed to appear or respond to the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing. Pursuant to § 1.49 of the Commission's General Rules of Practice and Procedure [Tex. R. R. Comm'n, 16 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 1.49] and after being duly submitted to the Railroad Commission of Texas at conference held in its offices in Austin, Texas, the Commission makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Tom D. Horn, Sole Proprietor (400215), ("Respondent"), was given Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent Form P-5 (Organization Report) address, which was signed.
2. The certified receipt containing the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing, was signed on October 11, 2012. The certified receipt is included in the file and has been on file with the Commission for 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance.
3. On September 29, 2009, Respondent, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its sole proprietor consisted of the following individual(s): Tom D. Horn.
4. Tom D. Horn, as sole proprietor, was a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent, as defined by Texas Natural Resources Code Section 91.114, during the time period of the violations of Commission rules committed by respondent.

5. The violations of Commission rules committed by respondent are related to safety and the control of pollution.
6. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well No. 2 on the C.L. Culver (096941) Lease ("subject well"/"subject lease") by filing a P-4 Form (Producers Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance) effective on September 1, 1999.
7. Respondent's P-5 (Organization Report) became delinquent on June 1, 2010. Respondent had \$10,756.00 cash as its financial assurance at the time of its last P-5 renewal.
8. Injection into the subject well ceased in August 2005.
9. The Statewide 14(b)(2) plugging extension for Well No. 2 on the C.L. Culver (096941) Lease was denied on November 22, 2006 for an H-5 (Mechanical Integrity Test) issue.
10. The total cost to the State of plugging the subject well is \$13,911.00.
11. Usable quality groundwater is likely to be contaminated by migrations or discharges of saltwater and other oil and gas wastes from the subject well. Unplugged wellbores constitute a cognizable threat to the public health and safety because of the potential for pollution.
12. A Commission District inspection was conducted on January 11, 2011 for the C.L. Culver (096941) Lease. Respondent failed to backfill a dry workover pit. Commission records show that the subject well was completed on December 5, 1980.
13. Unfilled pits constitute a hazard to public health and safety because of the potential for illegal dumping in the pits and the potential for surface run-off to collect in the pit and seep into subsurface waters.
14. Well No. 2 on the C.L. Culver (096941) Lease was permitted as a salt water disposal well on June 9, 1999 (Permit # 02198). Commission District records indicate that Well No. 2 is required to be tested annually and that the last reported mechanical integrity test on Well No. 2 was conducted on December 3, 2002.
15. Disposal/Injection wells must pass a pressure test at least once every five years to show that the well is not leaking, that waste is being confined to the permitted injection interval, and that useable quality water zones are properly isolated. Any injection of fluid down a wellbore could be a potential source of pollution. Without testing and supporting documentation, the Commission cannot determine if a well poses a threat to natural resources.
16. A Commission District inspection was conducted on January 11, 2011 for the C.L. Culver (096941) Lease. Well No. 2 is open to the atmosphere.
17. Maintenance of surface control by wellhead assemblies is necessary to prevent the discharge of oil and gas wastes on the subject lease constituting a hazard to public health and safety because the discharges of oil and gas wastes onto land surface can migrate into surface or subsurface waters.

18. The Respondent has not demonstrated good faith since it failed to timely plug or otherwise place the subject lease and subject well in compliance after being notified of the violations by the District Office and failed to appear at the hearing to explain its inaction.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Proper notice was issued by the Railroad Commission to respondent and to all other appropriate persons legally entitled to notice.
2. All things necessary to the Commission attaining jurisdiction over the subject matter and the parties in this hearing have been performed or have occurred.
3. Respondent is in violation of Commission Statewide Rules 8(d)(4)(G)(i)(III), 9(12), 13(b)(1)(B) and 14(b)(2).
4. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 8(d)(4)(G)(i)(III), which requires workover pits to be dewatered, filled and compacted within 120 days from completion of workover operations.
5. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 9(12), which requires that each disposal well shall be tested for mechanical integrity at least once every five years.
6. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 13(b)(1)(B), which requires surface control of all wells be maintained with wellhead assemblies.
7. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease and subject well in compliance with all applicable Commission rules according to Statewide Rules 14, 58, and 79 and Chapters 89 and 91 of the Texas Natural Resources Code.
8. The documented violations committed by the respondent constitute acts deemed serious, a hazard to the public health, and demonstrate a lack of good faith pursuant to TEX. NAT. RES. CODE ANN. §81.0531.

9. As a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent at the time respondent violated Commission rules related to safety and the control of pollution, Tom D. Horn, and any other organization in which he may hold a position of ownership or control, shall be subject to the restrictions of Texas Natural Resource Code Section 91.114(a)(2) for a period of no more than seven years from the date the order entered in this matter becomes final, or until the conditions that constituted the violations herein are corrected or are being corrected in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed; and all administrative, civil, and criminal penalties and all cleanup and plugging costs incurred by the State relating to those conditions are paid or are being paid in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed, whichever is earlier.

IT IS ORDERED THAT within 30 days from the day immediately following the date this order becomes final:

1. Tom D. Horn, Sole Proprietor (400215), shall plug the C.L. Culver (096941) Lease, Well No. 2, Panhandle, West Field, Carson County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations; and
2. Tom D. Horn, Sole Proprietor (400215), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **SIX THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$6,500.00)**.

It is further **ORDERED** by the Commission that this order shall not be final and effective until 20 days after a party is notified of the Commission's order. A party is presumed to have been notified of the Commission's order three days after the date on which the notice is actually mailed. If a timely motion for rehearing is filed by any party at interest, this order shall not become final and effective until such motion is overruled, or if such motion is granted, this order shall be subject to further action by the Commission. Pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.146(e), the time allotted for Commission action on a motion for rehearing in this case prior to its being overruled by operation of law, is hereby extended until 90 days from the date the parties are notified of the order.

All requested findings of fact and conclusions of law which are not expressly adopted herein are denied. All pending motions and requests for relief not previously granted or granted herein are denied.

Noncompliance with the provisions of this order is subject to enforcement by the Attorney General and subject to civil penalties of up to \$10,000.00 per day per violation.

Done this 26th day of November 2013.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated November 26, 2013)

MRC/sa