

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

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 10-0273141

ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY SOFAMCO, INC. (800296), AS TO THE MENKE LEASE, WELL NO. 1 (621596), WILDCAT FIELD, RANDALL COUNTY, TEXAS

FINAL ORDER

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on April 18, 2013, and that the respondent, Sofamco Inc. (800296), failed to appear or respond to the Notice of 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. Sofamco, Inc. (800296), ("Respondent") was given Notice of Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent P-5 address on the Form P-5 Organization Report, which was delivered; however, not returned to the Commission.
2. The returned certified receipt attached to Original Complaint and the Notice of Hearing mailed to Respondents, most recent P-5 address, was delivered and noticed; however, no further information for this document has been received by the Commission. The returned certified receipt attached to the Original Complaint and the Notice of Hearing mailed to the President, Stanton David Soderstrom; was signed and returned to the Commission on March 18, 2013. The certified receipt has been on file with the Commission for 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance.
3. On February 3, 2012, Respondent, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individual(s): Stanton David Soderstrom, President; and Brent Stewart Soderstrom, Vice-President.
4. Stanton David Soderstrom, 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. Brent Stewart Soderstrom, 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.

6. The violations of Commission rules committed by respondent are related to safety and the control of pollution.
7. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well No. 1 (621596) on the Menke Lease ("subject well"/"subject lease") by filing a Form W-1 (Application to Drill, Deepen, Plug Back or Re-Enter) with the Commission on June 30, 2006.
8. According to Commission records the Respondent's Form P-5 (Organization Report) became delinquent on May 1, 2013. Respondent had \$25,000.00 cash as its financial assurance at the time of its last P-5 renewal.
9. Commission District inspections were conducted on September 20, 2007, November 15, 2007, June 24, 2009, September 16, 2009, December 15, 2009, May 19, 2010, September 3, 2010 and April 15, 2011 for the Menke Lease. Respondent failed to backfill the cellar and remove guy line anchors.
10. The subject well has not been properly plugged in accordance with, and is not otherwise in compliance with, Statewide Rule 14.
11. Usable quality groundwater in the area is likely to be contaminated by migrations or discharges of saltwater and other oil and gas wastes from the subject wells. Unplugged wellbores constitute a cognizable threat to the public health and safety because of the probability of pollution.
12. Commission district inspections were conducted on September 20, 2007, November 15, 2007, June 24, 2009, September 16, 2009, December 15, 2009, May 19, 2010, September 3, 2010 and April 15, 2011 for the Menke Lease. Respondent failed to backfill and compact reserve pits. Commission records show that the subject well was plugged and abandoned as a dry hole on August 17, 2006, with a W-3 filed with the District Office on April 16, 2007.
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. The Respondent has not demonstrated good faith since it failed to plug or timely 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)(I) and 14(d)(2).
4. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 8(d)(4)(G)(i)(I), which requires reserve pits and mud circulation pits to be dewatered, backfilled and compacted within one year of cessation of drilling operations.
5. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 14(d)(12), which requires that the operator shall fill the rathole, mouse hole, and cellar, and shall empty all tanks, vessels, related piping and flowlines that will not be actively used in the continuing operation of the lease within 120 days after plugging work is completed.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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, Stanton David Soderstrom, 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.
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, Brent Stewart Soderstrom, 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. Sofamco, Inc. (800296), shall place the Menke Lease, Well No. 1 (621596), Wildcat Field, Fisher County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations; and
2. Sofamco, Inc. (800296), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,500.00)**.

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 13th day of June 2013.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated June 13, 2013)

MRC