



**WYOMING**

**Land Quality Division**  
**Environmental Quality Council**  
**Rulemaking Hearing**

**March 2, 2016**

A black and white photograph of a worker in a hard hat and work clothes operating a large drilling rig mounted on a truck. The rig is positioned on a dirt surface, and there are large piles of dirt or coal in the foreground. The background shows some trees and a building.

# **LAND QUALITY DIVISION**

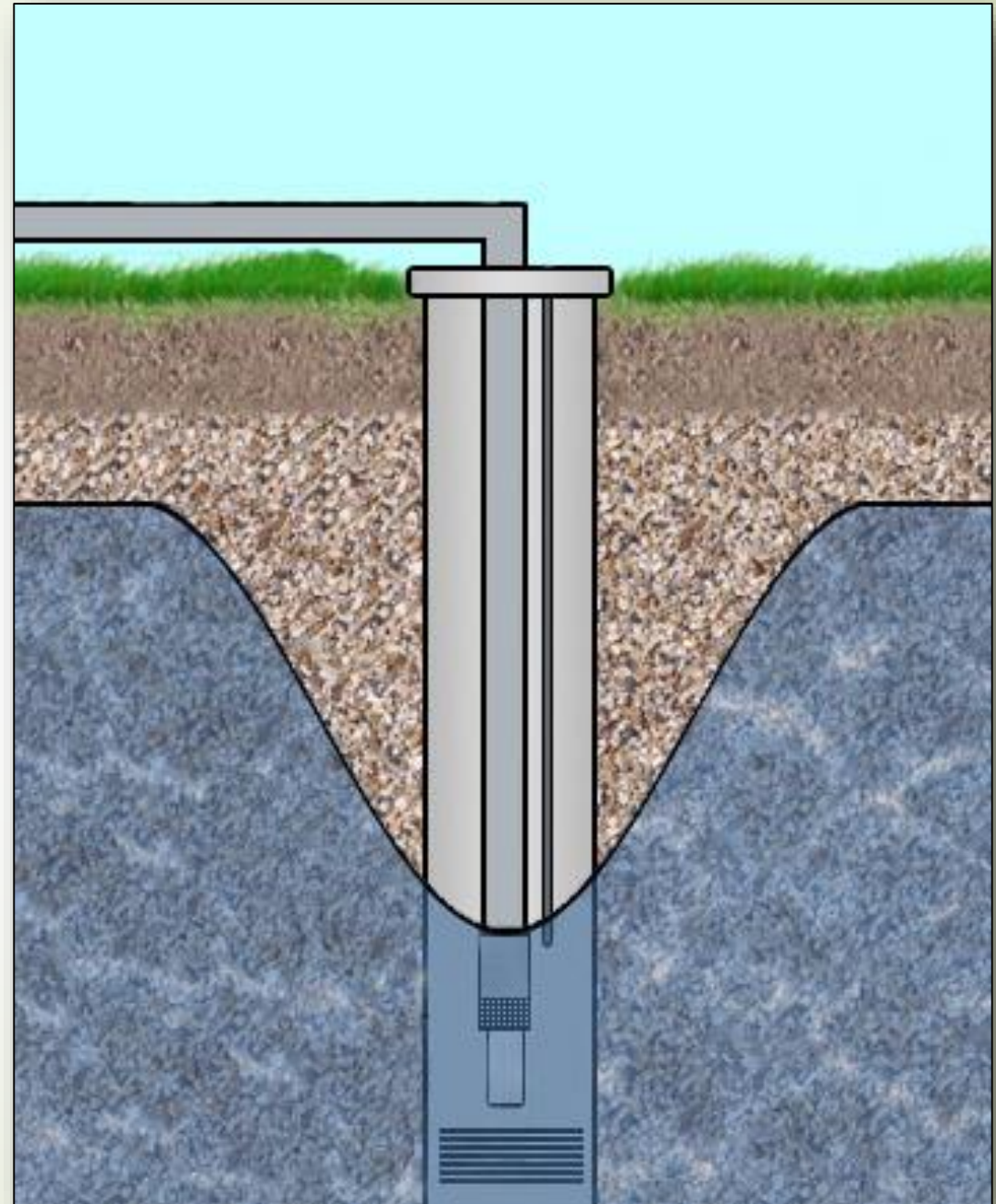
## **Draft Proposed Coal Rules**

### **Chapter 14**

### **Exploration for Coal by Drilling**



**Movement  
of water  
within well  
systems  
can be  
problematic**



# Managing Risk through Well Standards



UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Lincoln EXTENSION



# STATUTORY CORE

**§ 35 -11- 404**

**Drill Holes to be Capped, Sealed or Plugged**



# Background Regulatory History

**1992** - Chapter 14 promulgated.

**1998** - Last time Chapter 14 was updated.

**2011** - SEO revised Water Well Construction Standards.

**2012** - WQD revises Well Construction regulations.

**2012** - LQD revised Non-Coal Chapter 8 to be consistent with SEO and WQD.

# Chapter 14

## A Brief Summary of Substantive Changes

- Updated to reflect current industry standards for drill hole plugging and abandonment
- Updated to provide consistency between SEO, WQD and LQD regulations
- Surface restoration requirements given a separate section number
- Revised bonding and bond release

# Chapter 14, Section 1

## Conducting Exploration by Drilling

- **Previously – rule stated “follow § 35-11-404”**
- **Specifies that requirements of this Chapter apply to exploration holes within a permitted mine**
- **Specifies that any exploration drilling outside of a permitted mine requires submittal of a Coal Notification and a reclamation bond**



# Chapter 14, Section 2

## Drill Hole Abandonment Requirements

- **Eliminates reference to drilling mud as acceptable sealant material**
- **Requires drill hole to be filled completely from bottom to ground surface**
- **Defines acceptable grout or sealant materials and special conditions for their use**



## Chapter 14, Section 3 - Reclamation

This section was split out as a stand alone section for clarity.

**Requires restoration to the original conditions that existed prior to drilling disturbance.**





## Chapter 14, Section 4 - Bonding

**This section now codifies bonding requirements:**

- **Eliminates flat \$10,000 bond, allows for individual hole bonds**
- **Allows for bond reduction after drill hole abandonment, surface restoration and seeding**
- **Allows for full bond release following successful vegetation establishment**





# Chapter 14, Section 5

## Termination and Report of Operations

Revised to include:

- Option of requiring additional hole completion and surface restoration rather than just bond release or forfeiture
- 5 year confidentiality provision added to be consistent with W.S. 35-11-404(e), with a 5 year extension upon request, rather than 2 years in old Section 2

## Chapter 14, Section 6 - Exceptions

- Revised to clarify that drill hole abandonment and restoration requirements do not apply to **developmental** drilling in advance of an open pit mine (within 500 ft. of active mining)
- Exclusion clause regarding oil and gas exploration remains in place

# Chapter 14, Section 7

## Installation of Wells for Baseline Information

**This is a new section.....**

- Provides framework for the installation of baseline groundwater monitoring and testing wells outside of the permit area
- Plugging, sealing, and surface restoration requirements are same as for exploration holes (Section 2 and 3) and are consistent with industry standards



# QUESTIONS ?

