

ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMORANDUM

Well Construction Memorandum No. 9

January 22, 2015

To: Ground Water Protection Staff – State and Regional Offices

From: Mat Weaver 

**Re: Guidance regarding decommissioning of bore holes drilled for collecting soil or rock samples, determining geologic properties or mineral exploration.**

**Purpose:** The memorandum provides Department policy regarding decommissioning of bore holes, including those which are exempt from permits.

**Application:** This guidance applies to drillers, contractors, companies, engineers, geologists and property owners (responsible parties) drilling bore holes for collecting soil or rock samples, determining geologic properties or mineral exploration.

The following policy regarding decommissioning of borings is to be implemented immediately.

1. The Idaho Well Construction Standards Rules (Rules), IDAPA 37.03.09, regulate drilling and well construction of water wells in Idaho. The Rules include requirements for decommissioning wells that do not meet construction standards, unused wells, wells that pose a threat to human health and safety, wells in violation of IDAPA 58.01.11 "Ground Water Quality Rule" and wells that have no valid water right.
2. The Rules require that borings drilled for collecting soil or rock samples, determining geologic properties and mineral exploration, including gravel pits, be decommissioned in accordance with the minimum standards. This includes holes less than 18 feet deep.
3. All bore holes must be completely filled with approved seal material to ground surface. Approved seal materials are defined in the Rules and consist of bentonite or neat cement.
4. Borings under pavement may place approved seal material to within 5 feet of ground surface to allow for proper bedding of pavement or compaction of fill material in the upper 5 feet.
5. Alternative decommissioning plans will be evaluated on a case by case basis by submitting a waiver and providing a detailed plan. The decommissioning plan and waiver request will be evaluated by the Department and either approved or denied.