



## Ohio Revised Code

### Section 1509.31 Operation of well; notice to holder of royalty interest of assignment or transfer of entire interest in lease.

Effective: October 17, 2019

Legislation: House Bill 166 - 133rd General Assembly

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(A)(1) No person shall operate a well in this state unless the person first registers with and obtains an identification number from the chief of the division of oil and gas resources management.

(2) Whenever the entire interest of an oil and gas lease is assigned or otherwise transferred, the assignor or transferor shall notify the holders of the royalty interests, and, if a well or wells exist on the lease, the division of oil and gas resources management, of the name and address of the assignee or transferee by certified mail, return receipt requested, not later than thirty days after the date of the assignment or transfer. When notice of any such assignment or transfer is required to be provided to the division, it shall be provided on a form prescribed and provided by the division and verified by both the assignor or transferor and by the assignee or transferee. The notice form applicable to assignments or transfers of a well to the owner of the surface estate of the tract on which the well is located shall contain a statement informing the landowner that the well may require periodic servicing to maintain its productivity; that, upon assignment or transfer of the well to the landowner, the landowner becomes responsible for compliance with the requirements of this chapter and rules adopted under it, including, without limitation, the proper disposal of brine obtained from the well, the plugging of the well when it becomes incapable of producing oil or gas, and the restoration of the well site; and that, upon assignment or transfer of the well to the landowner, the landowner becomes responsible for the costs of compliance with the requirements of this chapter and rules adopted under it and the costs for operating and servicing the well.

(3) Notwithstanding division (A)(2) of this section, the assignee or transferee shall notify the division of oil and gas resources management of the assignment or transfer if both of the following apply:

(a) The assignor or transferor failed to notify the division of the assignment or transfer as required by division (A)(2) of this section;

(b) The assignor or transferor is deceased, dissolved, cannot be located, or is otherwise incapable of



complying with the notification requirement.

The assignee or transferee shall notify the division of the assignment or transfer on a form prescribed and provided by the division. At a minimum, the form shall require the assignee or transferee to attest that the assignee or transferee is the owner. The division shall not charge a fee for such assignment or transfer when notice is provided in accordance with division (A)(3) of this section.

(B) When the entire interest of a well is proposed to be assigned or otherwise transferred to the landowner for use as an exempt domestic well, the owner who has been issued a permit under this chapter for the well shall submit to the chief of the division of oil and gas resources management an application for the assignment or transfer that contains all documents that the chief requires. The application for such an assignment or transfer shall be prescribed and provided by the chief. The chief may approve the application if the application is accompanied by a release of all of the oil and gas leases that are included in the applicable formation of the drilling unit, the release is in a form such that the well ownership merges with the fee simple interest of the surface tract, and the release is in a form that may be recorded. However, if the owner of the well does not release the oil and gas leases associated with the well that is proposed to be assigned or otherwise transferred or if the fee simple tract that results from the merger of the well ownership with the fee simple interest of the surface tract is less than five acres, the proposed exempt domestic well owner shall post a five thousand dollar bond with the division prior to the assignment or transfer of the well to ensure that the well will be properly plugged. The chief, for good cause, may modify the requirements of this section governing the assignment or transfer of the interests of a well to the landowner. Upon the assignment or transfer of the well, the owner of an exempt domestic well is not subject to the severance tax levied under section 5749.02 of the Revised Code, but is subject to all applicable fees established in this chapter.

(C) The owner holding a permit under section 1509.05 of the Revised Code is responsible for all obligations and liabilities imposed by this chapter and any rules, orders, and terms and conditions of a permit adopted or issued under it, and no assignment or transfer by the owner relieves the owner of the obligations and liabilities until and unless the assignee or transferee files with the division the information described in divisions (A)(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (10), (11), and (12) of section 1509.06 of the Revised Code; obtains liability insurance coverage required by section 1509.07 of the Revised Code, except when none is required by that section; and executes and files a surety bond, negotiable



certificates of deposit or irrevocable letters of credit, or cash, as described in that section. Instead of a bond, but only upon acceptance by the chief, the assignee or transferee may file proof of financial responsibility, described in section 1509.07 of the Revised Code. Section 1509.071 of the Revised Code applies to the surety bond, cash, and negotiable certificates of deposit and irrevocable letters of credit described in this section. Unless the chief approves a modification, each assignee or transferee shall operate in accordance with the plans and information filed by the permit holder pursuant to section 1509.06 of the Revised Code.

(D) If a mortgaged property that is being foreclosed is subject to an oil or gas lease, pipeline agreement, or other instrument related to the production or sale of oil or natural gas and the lease, agreement, or other instrument was recorded subsequent to the mortgage, and if the lease, agreement, or other instrument is not in default, the oil or gas lease, pipeline agreement, or other instrument, as applicable, has priority over all other liens, claims, or encumbrances on the property so that the oil or gas lease, pipeline agreement, or other instrument is not terminated or extinguished upon the foreclosure sale of the mortgaged property. If the owner of the mortgaged property was entitled to oil and gas royalties before the foreclosure sale, the oil or gas royalties shall be paid to the purchaser of the foreclosed property.