

CHAPTER 11. FEE SCHEDULE

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As of the effective date of these rules, all non-exempt wells within the District are required to be registered with the District on the appropriate District form. The purpose of these fee requirements is to help the District fund its administrative costs as it seeks to promote groundwater conservation, provide for long-term availability of groundwater resources, reduce localized depletion of groundwater, prevent interference between wells, and prevent the degradation of groundwater.

11.1 Administrative Fees

(1) Returned Check Fee. The District will assess the person writing the returned check a \$30.00 fee for each check returned by the District Depository due to non-sufficient funds, account closed, signature missing, or any other problem causing such a return. This fee will be charged every time a check is returned.

(2) Late fee. A late fee of 10% of the amount due will be assessed if payments due the District are not received within 15 days following the due date. The fee payment and the late payment fee must be made within 30 days following the date of the assessment of the late payment fee.

(3) Trip Fee. If the District is required to have an employee or agent observe a well or meter or review documents not located within the District's office due to the actions or inaction of a Landowner, the District may charge a trip fee equal to the federal standard mileage rate for distance traveled to and from the location.

(4) Enforcement Fee. If the District is required to incur expenses to enforce the District's rules, including the payment of the District's production fee. The person responsible for causing the District to incur the expense shall reimburse the District for such expenses within ten days after receipt of a demand for payment from the District.

(5) Court-related Fee. If the District prevails in any suit to enforce its Rules, the District shall seek, and the Court may grant, in the same action, recovery for attorney's fees, costs for expert witnesses, and other costs incurred by the District's appearance before the Court. The Court may fix the amount of the attorney's fees.

(6) Application and Processing Fee. For fees incurred during the process, or if the District incurs additional costs including, but not limited to, professional consultant fees, or legal counsel, the applicant will be responsible for all costs incurred by the District.

11.2 Application Fees

(1) A fee shall be paid to the District when submitting an application as described under District Rules, Chapter 5.

(2) Any fee required by District Rules, Chapter 11.2(1) is a non-refundable minimum and no portion of the fee shall be returned to the applicant. The application fee is charged each time an application, as described in District Rules Chapter 5, is submitted. The District may assess an additional fee if the District incurs non-routine expenses relating to the investigation of the application, a protest to the application requiring a hearing, or recurring inspections caused by the applicant or the applicant's agent failing to comply with District Rules and requirements.

(3) The drilling application and other applicable fees are:

- a) Drilling new exempt domestic or livestock well - \$400.00
- b) Drilling a new well that does not meet the exemption under District Rules, Chapter 11.3, and incapable of producing greater than 25,000 gallons per day - \$400.00
- c) Drilling a new well that does not meet the exemption under District Rules, Chapter 11.3, and with a production capacity of greater than 25,000 gallons per day - \$1500.00
- d) Plugging an existing well - \$0.00 (prior to plugging, submittal of an application form and receiving approval from the District will be required)
- e) Drilling a test bore - \$300.00
- f) Completion of test bore, recondition, rework, or altering a well incapable of producing greater than 25,000 gallons per day - \$300.00
- g) Completion of test bore, recondition, rework, or altering a well capable of producing greater than 25,000 gallons per day - \$1200.00
- h) Variance to Rules Request - \$300.00

(4) The amount of the application fee assessed under District Rule Chapter 11.3 is based on the information provided in the application. If the District later determines that the information was incorrect, and a higher application fee should have been paid, all work on the well shall cease until the higher fee is paid.

Adopted March 19, 2018 by Board Order; effective January 1, 2019.

Revised October 19, 2020 by Board Order; effective October 19, 2020.

11.3 Production Fees

(1) Exemptions: The following types of wells are exempt from the District's production permit and fee:

- a) Wells for domestic and livestock use. Any well used solely to supply water for domestic use within a home or residence, or for livestock or poultry use, regardless of lot land size and one that is drilled, completed, or equipped so that is incapable of producing more than 25,000 gallons of groundwater per day;

- b) Any well that is not capable of producing more than 10,000 gallons per day; or is metered and does not produce more than 10 acre-ft of groundwater in a calendar year. This type of well must meet the District's quarterly reporting requirement.
- c) Per Texas Water Code, section 36.117. Any person or well exempt from payment of production fees assessed by the District under Texas Water Code, section 36.117, as modified by the Enabling Act.
 - i. A water well used solely to supply water for a rig that is actively engaged in drilling or exploration operations for an oil or gas well permitted by the Railroad Commission of Texas provided that the person holding the permit is responsible for drilling and operating the water well and the well is located on the same lease or field associated with the drilling rig; or,
 - ii. A water well authorized under a permit issued by the Railroad Commission of Texas under Chapter 134, Natural Resources Code, for production from such a well to the extent the withdrawals are required for mining activities regardless of any subsequent use of the water.

(2) Fees for Non-Exempt Users: The District imposes reasonable annual production fees on each well that is not exempt from permitting based on the amount of water withdrawn from the well as follows:

- a) Agricultural use: \$1 per acre-foot; or
- b) Other Non-Exempt Production: \$20.00 per acre-foot for groundwater used for any other purpose.

11.4 Measuring Devices

(1) Domestic and livestock exempt wells are not required to have a measuring device installed. The owner of a non-exempt well shall install and maintain a water well meter, or alternative measuring device that is incapable of being reset, or method approved by the District, designed to indicate the flow rate and cumulative amount of water withdrawn by that well, on each individual well no later than 36 months after the effective date of the enabling legislation HB2407 (84th Legislation 2015).

11.5 Payment of Production Fees

(1) It shall be the responsibility of the non-exempt well owner, or their representative, to submit detailed usage per well on a quarterly basis on form(s) approved by the District.

(2) Groundwater production and corresponding payment are due ten (10) days after the end of the calendar quarter, effective January 1, 2016. Production Fees shall be due and payable as follows:

- a) Agricultural: Number of gallons produced multiplied by \$0.0000030689 per gallon.
- b) All other uses: Number of gallons produced multiplied by \$0.00006138 per gallon.

11.6 Enforcement Upon failure to make payment of fees, all enforcement mechanisms provided by Texas Water Code 36.102 shall be available to the District and may be initiated by the District.

(1) A District may enforce this Chapter and its rules against any person by injunction, mandatory injunction, or other appropriate remedy in a court of competent jurisdiction.

(2) The Board, by rule, may set reasonable civil penalties against any person for breach of any rule of the District not to exceed \$10,000 per day per violation, and each day of a continuing violation constitutes a separate violation.

(3) A penalty under this section is in addition to any other penalty provided by the law of this state and may be enforced against any person by complaints filed in the appropriate court of jurisdiction in the county in which the district's principal office or meeting place is located.

(4) If the District prevails in any suit to enforce its rules, the District may seek, and the court may grant against any person, in the same action, recovery for attorney's fees, costs for expert witnesses, and other costs incurred by the District's appearance before the court. The amount of the attorney's fees may be fixed by the court.

(5) In an enforcement action by the District against any person that is a governmental entity for a violation of district rules, the limits on the amount of fees, costs, and penalties that the District may impose under Section 36.122, 36.205, or this section, or under a special law governing the District's operation under this Chapter, constitute a limit of liability of the governmental entity for the violation. This subsection shall not be construed to prohibit the recovery by a District of fees and costs under Subsection (4) in an action against any person that is a governmental entity.

Adopted December 21, 2015 by Board Order; effective January 1, 2016.

Adopted December 21, 2015 by Board Order; effective January 1, 2016

Revised October 19, 2020 by Board Order; effective October 19, 2020.