

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

Oil and Gas Division



NOTICE TO OPERATORS

New Guidelines for Permitting Saltwater Disposal Wells in the Permian Basin

Beginning June 1, 2025, applications for new and amended saltwater disposal well permits in the Permian Basin¹ will be evaluated based on new guidelines for permitting disposal wells. These guidelines are established to address the continued demand for underground saltwater disposal capacity in the Permian Basin and the physical limitations of the disposal reservoirs.

The Railroad Commission may issue a permit for a disposal well if it finds that the use or installation of the injection well will not endanger or affect any oil, gas or other mineral formation, and will, with proper safeguards, adequately protect both ground and surface fresh water from pollution.²

In addition, the Commission may require an applicant for a disposal well permit to provide additional information to demonstrate that fluids will be confined to the injection interval if the well is to be located in an area with an increased risk that fluids may not be confined due to conditions at the location.³ Such conditions exist in the Permian Basin from (1) large historical and current rates of saltwater disposal; (2) increased reservoir pressure in disposal formations; and (3) dense historical oil and gas development with numerous wellbore penetrations of active disposal formations.

These guidelines strengthen the Commission's current disposal well permitting requirements by focusing permitting efforts on ensuring that injected fluids remain confined to the disposal formations by demonstrating the mechanical characteristics of the confining strata and by closer scrutiny of wellbore penetrations within an expanded area of review. Standard permit conditions will be established based on the characteristics of the confining strata and the reservoir pressure at the time of permitting.

The guidelines are explained in detail on the [Injection-disposal permit procedures webpage](#) under "Permian Basin Disposal Well Review." Operators are requested to download this Microsoft Excel [spreadsheet](#) that includes two worksheet templates to submit proposed injection well parameters and information on existing wells within the two-mile area of review.

Commission staff will host a webinar on Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 9 – 10:30 a.m. to explain these guidelines and take questions. Please register for the webinar [here](#).

Questions regarding this notice should be directed to the Commission's Injection-Storage Permits Unit at UIC_Permits@rrc.texas.gov or 512-463-6792.

Please Forward to the Appropriate Section of Your Company

¹ The Permian Basin includes all counties in Railroad Commission Districts 7C, 8, and 8A.

² Texas Water Code §27.051(b).

³ 16 Texas Administrative Code §9(3)(C) and §46(b)(1)(D).