

Annular Casing Pressure Management for Onshore Wells

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Contents

	Page
1	Scope 1
1.1	General 1
1.2	Conditions of Applicability 1
2	Normative References 1
3	Definitions 1
4	Sources of Annular Casing Pressure 6
4.1	General 6
4.2	Thermally Induced Pressure 6
4.3	Operator-imposed Pressure 7
4.4	Sustained Casing Pressure 7
5	Onshore Well System Overview 7
5.1	Typical Well Schematic 7
5.2	Key Component Overview 7
5.3	Potential Communication Paths into the “A” Annulus 9
5.4	Potential Communication Paths into the Outer Annuli 10
6	Annular Casing Pressure Management Process 10
6.1	General 10
6.2	Non-monitorable Annular Casing Pressures 12
7	Maximum Allowable Wellhead Operating Pressure 12
7.1	General 12
7.2	Wellhead Section Ratings 12
7.3	Completion Equipment Ratings 13
7.4	Formation Fracture Breakdown Pressure 13
7.5	Tubular De-ratings 13
7.6	Other Considerations 16
8	Upper and Lower Diagnostic Thresholds 17
8.1	General 17
8.2	Considerations when Establishing a Diagnostic Threshold 17
8.3	Basis of DT Values 18
8.4	Periodic Review of Diagnostic Thresholds 18
9	Methods and Frequency of Monitoring Annular Casing Pressure 19
9.1	General 19
9.2	Detection and Verification 19
9.3	Routine Monitoring of Wells with Annular Casing Pressure within Diagnostic Thresholds 19
9.4	Monitoring of Wells with Sustained Casing Pressure above the Upper Diagnostic Threshold 20
9.5	Monitoring of Wells with Thermally Induced Casing Pressure 20
9.6	Monitoring of Wells with Operator-imposed Pressures 21
10	Annular Casing Pressure Evaluation Tests 21
10.1	General 21
10.2	Pressure Bleed-down/Build-up Test Methods and Analysis 22
10.3	Thermally Induced Casing Pressure Evaluation Methods and Analysis 24
10.4	Diagnostic Actions following Bleed-down and Build-up Tests 26
10.5	Subsequent Bleed-down and Build-up Tests 27
11	Documentation 28

Contents

	Page
11.1 Annular Casing Pressure Management Plan	28
11.2 Monitoring Records	29
11.3 Diagnostic Test Records	30
11.4 Maximum Allowable Wellhead Operating Pressure	34
12 Risk Management Considerations	35
12.1 General Considerations	35
12.2 Risk Management Overview	35
12.3 Risk Assessment Techniques	36
12.4 Risk Assessment Considerations	36
Annex A (informative) Pressure Containment and Communication Path Considerations in Well Design ...	39
Annex B (informative) Example Calculations for the Tubular Component of the MAWOP	45
Bibliography	51
Figures	
1 Typical Onshore Wellbore Schematic	8
2 Annular Casing Pressure Management Process Flow Diagram	11
3 Upper and Lower Diagnostic Thresholds	17
Tables	
B.1 Components of Example Well	45
B.2 Well Pressures	46
B.3 Example Data for Default Designation Method Calculations	46
B.4 Example Data for Simple De-rating Method Calculations	47
B.5 Revised "A" Annulus MAWOP and Upper DT	48
B.6 Example Data for Explicit De-rating Method Calculations	49
B.7 Revised "B" Annulus MAWOP and Upper DT	50

Introduction

This recommended practice is intended to serve as a guide for managing annular casing pressure (ACP) in onshore wells. Onshore wells are subject to the same causes of ACP as wells constructed and operated in offshore environments (discussed in API 90). The architecture of an onshore well is such that it generally provides physical access to each casing annulus at the wellhead.

Wells are designed to permit operation under pressure. The existence of pressure in a contained annular space is only problematic when that pressure exceeds the designed (or de-rated) maximum allowable wellhead operating pressure (MAWOP) or when a change in the pressure indicates a potential loss of well integrity.

Annular Casing Pressure Management for Onshore Wells

1 Scope

1.1 General

This document is intended to serve as a guide to monitor and manage annular casing pressure (ACP) in onshore wells, including production, injection, observation/monitoring, and storage wells. This document applies to wells that exhibit thermally induced, operator-imposed, or sustained ACP. It includes criteria for establishing diagnostic thresholds (DTs), monitoring, diagnostic testing, and documentation of ACP for onshore wells. Also included is a discussion of risk management considerations that can be used for the evaluation of individual well situations where the annular casing pressure falls outside the established diagnostic thresholds.

This document recognizes that an ACP outside of the established DTs can result in a risk to well integrity. The level of risk presented by ACP depends on many factors, including the design of the well, the performance of barrier systems within the well, the source of the annular casing pressure, and whether there is an indication of annular flow exists. This document provides guidelines in which a broad range of casing annuli that exhibit annular casing pressure can be managed while maintaining well integrity.

1.2 Conditions of Applicability

This document applies to annular casing pressure management in onshore wells during normal operation. In this context, normal operation is considered the operational phase during the life of a well that begins at the end of the well construction process and extends through the initiation of well abandonment operations, excluding any periods of well intervention or workover activities.

The design and construction of wellbores for the prevention of unintended ACP and the management of ACP during drilling, completion, well intervention and workover, and abandonment operations are beyond the scope of this document. The isolation of potential flow zones during well construction (zones that can be the source of sustained annular casing pressure) is addressed in API 65-2. In some cases, the annular casing pressure can be reduced or remediated. The remediation of sustained casing pressure (SCP) is also beyond the scope of this document.

2 Normative References

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document applies (including any addenda/errata).

API Technical Report 5C3, *Bulletin on Formulas and Calculations for Casing, Tubing, Drill Pipe and Line Pipe Properties*

API Specification 5CT, *Specification for Casing and Tubing*

API Standard 65-2, *Isolating Potential Flow Zones during Well Construction*

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this document the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1

annulus

The space between the borehole and tubulars or between tubulars, where fluid (liquid and/or gas) can flow.