# WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §22-6-26

**§22-6-26. Performance bonds; corporate surety or other security.**

(a) No permit shall be issued pursuant to this article unless a bond as described in subsection (d) of this section which is required for a particular activity by this article is or has been furnished as provided in this section.

(b) A separate bond as described in subsection (d) of this section may be furnished for a particular oil or gas well, or for a particular well for the introduction of liquids for the purposes provided in section twenty-five of this article. A separate bond as described in subsection (d) of this section shall be furnished for each well drilled or converted for the introduction of liquids for the disposal of pollutants or the effluent therefrom. Each of these bonds shall be in the sum of $5,000, payable to the State of West Virginia, conditioned on full compliance with all laws, rules relating to the drilling, redrilling, deepening, casing and stimulating of oil and gas wells (or, if applicable, with all laws, rules relating to drilling or converting wells for the introduction of liquids for the purposes provided in section twenty-five of this article or for the introduction of liquids for the disposal of pollutants or the effluent therefrom) and to the plugging, abandonment and reclamation of wells and for furnishing such reports and information as may be required by the director.

(c) When an operator makes or has made application for permits to drill or stimulate a number of oil and gas wells or to drill or convert a number of wells for the introduction of liquids for the purposes provided in section twenty-five of this article, the operator may in lieu of furnishing a separate bond furnish a blanket bond in the sum of $50,000, payable to the State of West Virginia, and conditioned as aforesaid in subsection (b) of this section.

(d) The form of the bond required by this article shall be approved by the director and may include, at the option of the operator, surety bonding, collateral bonding (including cash and securities) letters of credit, establishment of an escrow account, self-bonding or a combination of these methods. If collateral bonding is used, the operator may elect to deposit cash, or collateral securities or certificates as follows: Bonds of the United States or its possessions, of the federal land bank, or the homeowners' loan corporation; full faith and credit general obligation bonds of the State of West Virginia, or other states, and of any county, district or municipality of the State of West Virginia or other states; or certificates of deposit in a bank in this state, which certificates shall be in favor of the division. The cash deposit or market value of such securities or certificates shall be equal to or greater than the amount of the bond. The director shall, upon receipt of any such deposit of cash, securities or certificates, promptly place the same with the Treasurer of the State of West Virginia whose duty it shall be to receive and hold the same in the name of the state in trust for the purpose of which the deposit is made when the permit is issued. The operator shall be entitled to all interest and income earned on the collateral securities filed by such operator. The operator making the deposit shall be entitled from time to time to receive from the state Treasurer, upon the written approval of the director, the whole or any portion of any cash,

WV Legislature

securities or certificates so deposited, upon depositing with the Treasurer in lieu thereof, cash or other securities or certificates of the classes herein specified having value equal to or greater than the amount of the bond.

(e) When an operator has furnished a separate bond from a corporate bonding or surety company to drill, fracture or stimulate an oil or gas well and the well produces oil or gas or both, its operator may deposit with the director cash from the sale of the oil or gas or both until the total deposited is $5,000. When the sum of the cash deposited is n $5,000, the separate bond for the well shall be released by the director. Upon receipt of such cash, the director shall immediately deliver the same to the Treasurer of the State of West Virginia. The Treasurer shall hold such cash in the name of the state in trust for the purpose for which the bond was furnished and the deposit was made. The operator shall be entitled to all interest and income which may be earned on the cash deposited so long as the operator is in full compliance with all laws, rules relating to the drilling, redrilling, deepening, casing, plugging, abandonment and reclamation of the well for which the cash was deposited and so long as the operator has furnished all reports and information as may be required by the director. If the cash realized from the sale of oil or gas or both from the well is not sufficient for the operator to deposit with the director the sum of $10,000 within one year of the day the well started producing, the corporate or surety company which issued the bond on the well may notify the operator and the director of its intent to terminate its liability under its bond. The operator then shall have thirty days to furnish a new bond from a corporate bonding or surety company or collateral securities or other forms of security, as provided in the next preceding paragraph of this section with the director. If a new bond or collateral securities or other forms of security are furnished by the operator, the liability of the corporate bonding or surety company under the original bond shall terminate as to any acts and operations of the operator occurring after the effective date of the new bond or the date the collateral securities or other forms of security are accepted by the Treasurer of the State of West Virginia. If the operator does not furnish a new bond or collateral securities or other forms of security, as provided in the next preceding paragraph of this section, with the director, the operator shall immediately plug, fill and reclaim the well in accordance with all of the provisions of law and rules applicable thereto. In such case, the corporate or surety company which issued the original bond shall be liable for any plugging, filling or reclamation not performed in accordance with such laws and rules.

(f) Any separate bond furnished for a particular well prior to the effective date of this chapter shall continue to be valid for all work on the well permitting prior to July 11, 1985; but no permit shall hereafter be issued on such a particular well without a bond complying with the provisions of this section. Any blanket bond furnished prior to July 11, 1985 shall be replaced with a new blanket bond conforming to the requirements of this section, at which time the prior bond shall be discharged by operation of law; and if the director determines that any operator has not furnished a new blanket bond, the director shall notify the operator by certified mail, return receipt requested, of the requirement for a new blanket bond; and failure to submit a new blanket bond within sixty days after receipt of the notice from the director shall work a forfeiture under subsection (i) of this section of the blanket

WV Legislature

bond furnished prior to July 11, 1985.

(g) Any such bond shall remain in force until released by the director and the director shall release the same upon satisfaction that the conditions thereof have been fully performed. Upon the release of any such bond, any cash or collateral securities deposited shall be returned by the director to the operator who deposited same.

(h) Whenever the right to operate a well is assigned or otherwise transferred, the assignor or transferor shall notify the department of the name and address of the assignee or transferee by certified mail, return receipt requested, not later than five days after the date of the assignment or transfer. No assignment or transfer by the owner shall relieve the assignor or transferor of the obligations and liabilities unless and until the assignee or transferee files with the department the well name and the permit number of the subject well, the county and district in which the subject well is located, the names and addresses of the assignor or transferor, and assignee or transferee, a copy of the instrument of assignment or transfer accompanied by the applicable bond, cash, collateral security or other forms of security, described in section twelve, fourteen, twenty-three or twenty-six of this article, and the name and address of the assignee's or transferee's designated agent if assignee or transferee would be required to designate such an agent under section six of this article, if assignee or transferee were an applicant for a permit under said section six. Every well operator required to designate an agent under this section shall within five days after the termination of such designation notify the department of such termination and designate a new agent.

Upon compliance with the requirements of this section by assignor or transferor and assignee or transferee, the director shall release assignor or transferor from all duties and requirements of this article, and the deputy director shall give written notice of release unto assignor or transferor of any bond and return unto assignor or transferor any cash or collateral securities deposited pursuant to section twelve, fourteen, twenty-three or twenty-six of this article.

(i) If any of the requirements of this article or rules promulgated pursuant thereto or the orders of the director have not been complied with within the time limit set by the violation notice as defined in sections three, four and five of this article, the performance bond shall then be forfeited.

(j) When any bond is forfeited pursuant to the provisions of this article or rules promulgated pursuant thereto, the director shall give notice to the Attorney General who shall collect the forfeiture without delay.

(k) All forfeitures shall be deposited in the Treasury of the State of West Virginia in the special reclamation fund as defined in section twenty-nine of this article.

WV Legislature