



# User Reference Guide

CEQA  
CEQA Information Step

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## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

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### **Course Description**

The CEQA Information submission course describes the process that operators will use to enter data into WellSTAR regarding approved or certified CEQA documents, CEQA notices, local agency permits, and NEPA documents, as well as what to enter when documentation is lacking.

District CEQA reviewers then confirm that the information entered is correct before signing off the CEQA review. District CEQA Reviewers (Internal) should read through the External section of this document as it pertains to their review of the information.

Questions about CEQA Information submission can be directed to the CalGEM Districts or the CalGEM CEQA Unit in Headquarters.

#### Process Flow:

- Operator enters data into CEQA Information form in WellSTAR
  - Submits NOI/application
- District does a completeness review to determine if information is correctly entered and that required documentation is accounted for
  - Passes the Completeness Review or Returns the NOI/application back to the operator
- District CEQA reviewer evaluates CEQA documentation and/or information
  - Passes the CEQA review or Returns the NOI/application back to the operator

## **1 EXTERNAL**

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### **1.1 CEQA Information Step**

The CEQA Information step is associated with every program in WellSTAR (Well Management, UIC, UGS, and WST), and is the same step in each program. Depending on a 'Yes' or 'No' answer, each question has a different drop-down of additional questions or field boxes that need to be addressed. Questions and boxes with an asterisk next to them require answers before the step is considered complete.

Once saved, if the step is incomplete, red text will appear at the top of the step page notifying the operator of the fields that still need to be addressed. The step does not correct the operator when conflicting or incorrect information is entered. It was designed to be flexible and allow for answers with multiple combinations. Most of the time the data will be entered one of two ways: 1) There is an environmental document, or 2) There is no environmental document.

The following examples show how the CEQA Information step can be filled in for different scenarios. For detailed “how to” instructions in WellSTAR click on the Help button in the upper right corner of the CEQA Information step page.



## 1.2 How to Fill in the Step When There is an Environmental Document

If a Local Agency (City or County) has an adopted Negative Declaration (ND) or Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or a certified Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that covers the proposed project’s activities, then they are considered the Local Lead Agency. Instruction for filling in the step when there is a Local Lead Agency are shown below.

Did the Local Agency prepare an Environmental Document for this project? ?

**If the Local Agency prepared an environmental document for this project, please indicate which of the following applies:**

An environmental document was prepared for this project

The project is within the scope of a prior environmental document

Step	Action	Required Fields
1.	Select “Yes” if a Local Agency prepared an Environmental Document that applies to the NOI/application. The value selected in this field will determine which fields display below.	Yes/No dropdown
2.	Indicate if the Environmental Document was: Prepared for this project, or The project is within the scope of a prior Environmental Document.	Radio Buttons

Is there a CEQA Lead Agency? (other than DOGGR) ? \*

Yes       No

CEQA Information Submission

Step	Action	Required Fields
3.	Select "Yes" to indicate that there is a CEQA Lead Agency (other than CalGEM). The lead agency is the one that prepared the environmental document referred to in the first question.  The CEQA Lead Agency section opens.	Radio Button

**CEQA Lead Agency \***

CEQA Lead Agency Contact

CEQA Lead Agency Address

Address Line 2

City State Zip Code

Phone Number Extension

Email

**CEQA Document \*** ?

Environmental Impact Report       Addendum  
 Mitigated Negative Declaration       Supplemental  
 Negative Declaration       Subsequent  
 Substitute Document

Project Title

**Project Scope \*** ?

Date EIR Certified or ND/MND Adopted \* State Clearinghouse Number ? CEQA Notice Type \*  
 3/23/2017

Step	Action	Required Fields
4.	Complete the CEQA Lead Agency section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter the CEQA Lead Agency contact information.</li> </ul>	CEQA Lead Agency, CEQA Lead Agency

CEQA Information Submission

Step	Action	Required Fields
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the appropriate CEQA Lead Agency Documentation box and upload the document(s) to the Document Upload step.</li> <li>• Briefly summarize the original project scope from the Lead Agency CEQA document. Identify the page numbers where the proposed project activity is discussed in the Lead Agency's CEQA document (new drill, rework, abandonment, UIC, etc.).                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If you are providing a link instead of a PDF of the CEQA document, provide the link.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Enter the date the EIR was certified or the ND/MND was adopted.</li> <li>• Enter the State Clearinghouse number or number assigned by the local lead agency, as applicable.</li> <li>• Select the CEQA Notice type (typically NOD).</li> </ul>	Contact, Address, City, State, Zip Code, Phone Number, Email Address, CEQA Documentation, Project Scope, Date EIR Certified or ND/MND Adopted, and CEQA Notice Type

Please indicate the surface ownership ⓘ \*

Private
  State
  Federal
  Tribal

Please indicate the mineral ownership ⓘ \*

Private
  State
  Federal
  Tribal

Agency Name \*

BLM

CEQA Information Submission

Step	Action	Required Fields
5.	<p>Indicate the Surface and Mineral Ownership.</p> <p>If the Surface or Mineral Ownership is State or Federal a box will drop down.</p> <p>Multiple boxes may be checked at one time.</p>	<p>check One or more boxes, as applicable.</p> <p>Enter the agency name if State or Federal is checked.</p>

**CEQA Project Description \***

Please enter a CEQA Project description in the box below. You may also upload it as an attachment on the Document Upload Step, but please indicate that in the textbox below. Please include:

- Project Proposal
- Project Location
- Environmental Setting
- Local Agency Requirements
- If this project description applies to multiple wells, please include a list of all wells (include API # and Well Name/Designation, if known).
- Additional guidance on how to write a CEQA Project Description can be found on the DOGGR CEQA homepage

See Document Uploads section 11 CEQA Operator Checklist

Step	Action	Required Fields
6.	<p>Insert or attach a CEQA Project Description in the Document Upload step for the proposed project. Instruction on how to prepare a project description for this section is located in the <a href="#">Operator Guidance: Project Description</a> document on the <a href="#">CalGEM CEQA webpage</a>.</p>	<p>Project Description text box</p>

**1.2.1 Key Points**

- **Question One and Two are Related** - When the answer to the first question, “Did the Local Agency prepare an Environmental Document for this project” is “Yes”, the answer to the second question “Is there a CEQA Lead Agency? (other than DOGGR) will always be “Yes”.
  - An Exemption Resolution and Notice of Exemption (NOE) are not considered an Environmental Document.
- **CEQA Lead Agency Section** - Information for the CEQA Lead Agency section can be found in the Environmental Document provided by the CEQA Lead Agency, most likely on the title page of the document and within the project description.

- **CEQA Documentation** - Check the appropriate box(s) for the CEQA Document provided by the Local Lead Agency. The document must be either uploaded to the Document Upload step or a direct link to the document should be included in Project Scope.
- **Project Title** - The Project Title is the title provided in the Environmental Document.
- **Project Scope** - The Project Scope is a brief summary of the Environmental Document's description of what it covers. It is normally located under the project description section in the beginning of the environmental document.

The information listed in the Project Scope should include the page numbers in the Environmental Document that specifically address the NOI/application activities. If the Environmental Document does not specifically address the activity being permitted, it may not be applicable to the project.

- **Date EIR Certified or ND/MND Adopted** will be located on the Notice of Determination for the environmental document or a cover letter in the beginning of the environmental document.
- **State Clearinghouse Number** – The local lead agency is required to file a copy of the Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse if the environmental document will be used by a State Agency that performs discretionary approvals. (CCR 14 § 15075(d))
- **CEQA Notice Type** should always be NOD when a ND, MND, or EIR is submitted as the environmental document.
- **Local Permits** - If a permit was issued for the proposed activity, then the permit must be provided in the Document Upload step.
- **Surface and Mineral Ownership** - The forms allow for multiple box selections in the Surface and Mineral ownership section because it is designed for multiple programs. However, for Well Management (NOIs), only one selection should be made for surface, and one selection for mineral. The surface cannot be both Federal and private for a single well. For UIC, multiple selections for surface and multiple selections may be made as the project can cover multiple well locations.
- **Federal Surface Ownership** - If only Federal is checked for surface ownership, there is still a possibility that a local agency has prepared a CEQA document. Check with the Local Agency. Double check the CEQA Lead Agency information to ensure accuracy and confirm that any Environmental Documents provided apply to the NOI/application.

### 1.3 How to Fill in The Step When There is no Environmental Document

If the Local Agency (City/County) does not have an environmental document that covers the proposed project, then CalGEM assumes the role of Lead Agency when the proposed NOI/Application is reviewed.

When there is no environmental document available, the operator is tasked with discussing permitting requirements of their project with the local agency. This is so the local agency is aware of potential land uses occurring in their jurisdiction and can offer permitting requirements or advise.

In some cases, the local agency does not issue permits or may still issue a ministerial permit<sup>1</sup>. A current permit from the Local Agency or contact with them regarding other projects within the last year, shows that the operator has been in communication. When there is no environmental document, the CEQA Information submission step places the onus on the operator to put in writing that they have contacted the local agency to discuss permitting requirements.

Instruction for filling in the step when there is no environmental document is shown below.

**Did the Local Agency prepare an Environmental Document for this project? ⓘ \***

No ▾

**Since the Local Agency did not prepare an environmental document that covers the project, indicate if the project was exempted (with a Notice of Exemption or Local Agency resolution): \***

Yes, a NOE or resolution was adopted and will be uploaded to WellSTAR  
 No, there was no NOE or resolution prepared

**Please indicate if a permit was issued: \***

Permit was issued.  
 No permit was issued/Permit is not required

Step	Action	Required Fields
1.	Select "No". The Local Agency did not prepare an Environmental Document for the NOI/Application.  Two additional questions appear.	Yes/No dropdown
2.	Was the project exempted:  Select "Yes" if a NOE or resolution will be uploaded to WellSTAR.  Select "No" if no exemption was prepared.	Radio buttons

<sup>1</sup> A ministerial permit is a permit that is granted upon determination that a proposed project complies with established standards set forth in the zoning ordinance and/or other applicable policy documents.

CEQA Information Submission

<p>3. Was a permit issued: Yes or No</p>	<p>Radio Button</p>
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Is there a CEQA Lead Agency? (other than DOGGR) ⓘ \*

Yes  No

Local Agency

Local Agency Name \*  
Fresno County

Local Agency Contact Name \*  
Jose Martinez

CEQA Documentation \*  
 Exempt  None Available

Local Agency Contact Date \*  
7/2/2018

Phone Number \* (559) 600-4256 Phone Number Extension (Ext.)

Email \*  
J.Martinez@co.fresno.ca.us

Or

Is there a CEQA Lead Agency? (other than DOGGR) ⓘ \*

Yes  No

Local Agency

Local Agency Name \*  
Fresno County

Local Agency Contact Name \*  
Jose Martinez

CEQA Documentation \*  
 Exempt  None Available

State Clearinghouse Number  
2013021456

CEQA Notice Type \*  
Notice of Exemption

Step	Action	Required Fields
4.	<p>Select “No” to indicate that there is no CEQA Lead Agency.</p> <p>When selected, a Local Agency section opens requesting the Local Agency name and the name of the staff person at the Local Agency who was contacted.</p> <p>Under CEQA Documentation, two options are given. Select either Exempt or None Available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Exempt section requests confirmation that a Notice of Exemption or Local Resolution recognizing an exemption for the propose project will be uploaded to WellSTAR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fill in the remaining fields that request information about the exemption.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The None Available section requests evidence of communication with the Local Agency, since there is no environmental document or NOE/Resolution available for upload to WellSTAR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fill in the remaining fields that request information about the last time the local agency was contacted regarding permitting requirements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Local Agency Name, Local Agency Contact Name, CEQA Documentation, Exemption Information or Local Agency Contact Date, Phone Number, and Email</p>

Continue to fill out the CEQA Information Step for Surface Ownership, Mineral Ownership, and Project Description as explained above in Section 1.2 How to Fill in the Step When There is an Environmental Document.

### 1.3.1 Key Points

- **Permits** – The question asks if a permit was issued by the Local Agency to: 1) remind the operator to upload a copy of the permit, and 2) to remind the District CEQA reviewer to look for a permit as a sign of communication between the operator and Local Agency.
- **Exemption Notice or Resolution Required** - An Exemption Resolution or a Notice of Exemption (NOE) must be uploaded if the CEQA Information step is filled out indicating that the Local Agency has prepared one. If the NOE or Resolution is not available, None Available must be marked and the step must be filled out according to direction given for the None Available option.
- **Local Agency Contact Date** – Due to continually changing local ordinances, the date entered in this box should be no older than two years from the date the NOI/application was submitted, or the NOI/application may be returned. For purposes of CEQA compliance, the more recent the date, the more assurance CalGEM has that the operator and the local

agency communicated regarding any requirements applicable to the proposed project. The operator is responsible for current knowledge of all local agency permitting requirements and submittal of accurate information to CalGEM.

- **Unincorporated Kern County Local Agency Contact Date** – Kern County posted an Oil and Gas Permit Process Suspension letter on their [website](#) which can be viewed or downloaded by following this [link](#). The letter informs operators that any permits issued after March 25, 2020 would no longer undergo a CEQA review.

Operators with projects located in unincorporated Kern County should use the February 28, 2020 date of the letter to fill in the Local Agency Contact Date in the CEQA Information step and are encouraged to submit a copy of the Kern County letter in the Document Upload step of WellSTAR.

## 1.4 Federal Land

If the NOI/application is *only* located on Federal land. The following will apply:

Did the Local Agency prepare an Environmental Document for this project? ⓘ \*

Since the Local Agency did not prepare an environmental document that covers the project, indicate if the project was exempted (with a Notice of Exemption or Local Agency resolution): \*

Yes, a NOE or resolution was adopted and will be uploaded to WellSTAR

No, there was no NOE or resolution prepared

Please indicate if a permit was issued: \*

Permit was issued.

No permit was issued/Permit is not required

Step	Action	Required Fields
1.	Select “No” if the Local Agency (City/County) did not prepare an Environmental Document for the NOI/Application located on Federal land.  Two additional questions appear.	Yes/No dropdown
2.	Was a CEQA NOE or Local Exemption Resolution prepared:  Select “Yes” if a NOE or resolution will be uploaded to WellSTAR.  Select “No” if no NOE or Resolution was prepared.	Radio buttons
3.	Was a permit issued:  Yes or No	Radio Button

CEQA Information Submission

Is there a CEQA Lead Agency? (other than DOGGR) ⓘ \*

Yes  No

Local Agency

Local Agency Name \*

None

Local Agency Contact Name \*

None

CEQA Documentation \*

Exempt  None Available

State Clearinghouse Number

CEQA Notice Type \*

N/A

Step	Action	Required Fields
4.	<p>Select "No" to indicate that there is no CEQA Lead Agency.</p> <p>The Local Agency section opens requesting the Local Agency Name and the name of the staff person at the Local Agency who was contacted. For projects <i>only</i> located on Federal Land, do the following:</p> <p>Local Agency Name: None                      Local Agency Contact: None                      Under CEQA Documentation, two options are given. Select Exempt.                      Under CEQA Notice Type, select N/A</p>	<p>Local Agency Name,                      Local Agency Contact Name, CEQA Documentation, CEQA Notice Type</p>

CEQA Information Submission

Is a there a NEPA Lead Agency? \*  
 Yes  No

NEPA Lead Agency \*

NEPA Lead Agency Contact

NEPA Lead Agency Address

Address Line 2

City  State  Zip Code

Phone Number  Extension

Email \*

NEPA Document \*  
 Categorical Exclusion  Sundry Notice  
 Environmental Assessment/FONSI/DNA  Environmental Impact Statement

Project Title  NEPA Project Number

Date of Decision Record/Record of Decision   Publication Date  Federal Register Notice Number

Step	Action	Required Fields
5.	Select "Yes" there is a NEPA Lead Agency.	Radio Button
6.	Complete the NEPA Lead Agency section. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEPA Lead Agency contact information must be provided.</li> <li>• NEPA Lead Agency Documentation must be uploaded to the Document Upload step.</li> </ul>	NEPA Lead Agency, NEPA Lead Agency Address, City, State, Zip Code, Phone Number, Email Address, NEPA Documentation

### 1.4.1 Key Points

- **Addressing whether there is a CEQA Lead Agency** - If the Local Agency has *not* prepared a CEQA Environmental Document for the submitted NOI/Application, whether it is considered exempt, permitted by right, located on Federal property, or for any other reason, then the answer to the first question is "No". WellSTAR will assign the CEQA review task to the CEQA HQ Workgroup.
- **Local Agency section** – Under CEQA documentation, "Exempt" refers to a Notice of Exemption or Local Resolution that was approved by the Local Agency. However, for projects on Federal land the question does not apply. Since it requires an answer, follow the instruction for projects on Federal land above.
- **Remember to Upload Permits** - If a permit was issued, it must be provided in the Document Upload step.
- **NEPA information Required** - If the surface or mineral rights are owned by a Federal Agency, a NEPA document or Sundry Notice is required.
- **Where to Find NEPA Information** - NEPA Lead Agency information is available from the NEPA Document or Documentation.
- **Types of NEPA Documentation Required** - Check the appropriate NEPA Documentation box and upload the documentation to WellSTAR. For new wells, where both surface and/or mineral rights are federally owned, consistent with the Bureau of Land Management’s revised process, CalGEM will continue to need:
  - a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Application for Permit to Drill (BLM APD); and
  - an Environmental Assessment (EA)/Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (or Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)); and
  - a Record of Decision (ROD not required if a DNA was provided\*).

\* CalGEM will no longer require an ROD to be submitted if a DNA is provided. Previously, a BLM APD, EA/FONSI (or a DNA) and an ROD were all required to be submitted to CalGEM. For reworks and most abandonments, a Sundry Notice (or a BLM APD) is sufficient.

## 1.5 Multiple Surface Owners

For Underground Injection Control (UIC) project applications, there may be instances where The CEQA Information step needs to address both an environmental document prepared by a Local Lead Agency (County/City) and a NEPA document from the Federal government. See instruction above for How to Fill in the Step for a Local Lead Agency and Federal Land.

Because UIC application projects tend to cover large areas, there may be multiple land and mineral owners. The CEQA Information step allows for multiple ownerships to be checked. Agency Name(s) are required if State or Federal is checked.

**Please indicate the surface ownership** ⓘ \*

Private     State     Federal     Tribal

**Agency Name** \*

**Please indicate the mineral ownership** ⓘ \*

Private     State     Federal     Tribal

**Agency Name** \*

## 1.6 Documentation Required

Certain documents or documentation is required based on how each question in the CEQA Information Step is answered. Required documents are submitted through the Document Upload step.

**Did the Local Agency prepare an Environmental Document for this project?** ⓘ \*

**If the Local Agency prepared an environmental document for this project, please indicate which of the following applies:** \*

An environmental document was prepared for this project

The project is within the scope of a prior environmental document

**CEQA Documents** – Subject to the question above, an approved Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration, or a certified Environmental Impact Report is required to be uploaded in WellSTAR, or a link to the document can be provided in the Project Scope text box of the CEQA Lead Agency section.

## CEQA Information Submission

Did the Local Agency prepare an Environmental Document for this project? \* ?

Since the Local Agency did not prepare an environmental document that covers the project, indicate if the project was exempted (with a Notice of Exemption or Local Agency resolution): \*

Yes, a NOE or resolution was adopted and will be uploaded to WellSTAR

No, there was no NOE or resolution prepared

Please indicate if a permit was issued: \*

Permit was issued

No permit was issued / Permit is not required

**Exemption** - Subject to the question above, a Notice of Exemption or a Resolution from the Local Agency recognizing an exemption for the proposed project is required to be uploaded in WellSTAR.

Is there a NEPA Lead Agency? \*

Yes  No

**NEPA Documents** - Subject to the question above, for new wells, a BLM APD, an EA/FONSI (or a DNA), and an ROD (or a DNA) is required. For reworks and most abandonments, a Sundry Notice (or a BLM APD) is sufficient. Upload the documents/documentation to WellSTAR.

**CEQA Project Description \***

Please enter a CEQA Project description in the box below. You may also upload it as an attachment on the Document Upload Step, but please indicate that in the textbox below. Please include:

- Project Proposal
- Project Location
- Environmental Setting
- Local Agency Requirements
- If this project description applies to multiple wells, please include a list of all wells (include API # and Well Name/Designation, if known).
- Additional guidance on how to write a CEQA Project Description can be found on the DOGGR CEQA homepage

**Project Description** – Subject to the instruction above, the project description is the starting point for every project that must undergo a CEQA review at CalGEM. It is prepared by the operator for their NOI/application. It's important to note that this CEQA project description is focused on surface activities, and not on technical aspects of below-ground activities. Guidance and project description examples can be found in the [Operator Guidance: Project Description](#) document on the [CalGEM CEQA webpage](#).