

Public Safety in Oil and Gas



Who is Responsible for Public Safety?

The Commission works in the field inspecting oil and gas activities, responding to incidents, and addressing complaints from land owners, First Nations, public and other stakeholders. We have dedicated compliance and enforcement, emergency response and community relations teams working with industry and the public in order to mitigate risks and prevent incidents.

Importance of Incidents and Complaints

Incidents and complaints related to natural gas and oil activities are recorded and tracked through the Commission's database. Incidents are reported by industry to the Commission through Emergency Management BC. Incidents are classified into four categories reflecting level of risk and are remediated as quickly as practicable to prevent unnecessary escalation.

Complaints are reported by the public and stakeholders (and may also be reported by industry) and received through the Commission's 24-hour emergency telephone number. Each complaint is addressed individually and in most cases, inspectors are dispatched to the location to determine the cause of the complaint and assist to resolve the situation.

Complaints are important in helping reduce the risk of potential incidents, and the Commission commits to responding to all complaints within two hours.



Communication Toolbox

As detailed in the Commission's mandate and expressed in the mission statement, active engagement of our stakeholders and partners is a priority.

Community and landowner support through education, public engagement, mediation and dispute resolution prior to and during application submission and throughout operations.

Reports and publications posted online to inform, educate and encourage accessibility and flow of information.

Dawson Creek Resource Centre is an interactive display showcasing the history of oil and gas in B.C., land owner resources, local artifacts and information about how the oil and gas industry currently operates in northeast B.C.

Complaints are received, tracked, and inspectors may be dispatched to the location to assist in resolving the situation.

Inspections are conducted to ensure safe operations including: geophysical operations, construction, drilling, operating wells, pipelines, facilities and gas plants, restoration sites and incidents.



For Further Information

Email ogc.communications@bcogc.ca or call 250-794-5200

24 Hour Incident Reporting for Industry 1-800-663-3456

This information is published by the BC Oil and Gas Commission and available online at www.bcogc.ca

How Do We Proactively Regulate?

The Commission has the legislative authority to make decisions on proposed oil and gas activities. While the Commission does not set policy, the diverse expertise and experience of Commission staff provides critical insight at every level of oil and gas development. This knowledge base provides perspective through scientific evidence, guidance, best practices, reports, tools and analysis.

Companies looking to explore, develop, produce, and market oil and gas resources in B.C. must apply to the Commission. The Commission reviews, assesses and makes decisions on these applications. This consolidated single-window authority provides not only a one-stop place for all oil and gas and associated activity requirements, but a consistent application, decision, regulatory and compliance authority. Stakeholders work with one agency; therefore, the Commission serves the public interest by having an all-encompassing review process for oil and gas activities.

How Do I Stay Informed?

- The Commission hosts open house sessions to provide an opportunity for the public to dialogue with Commission staff regarding our role as a regulator and the future of natural gas and oil development.
- The Land Owner's Information Guide is posted online at bcogc.ca and describes exploration, development, and production with respect to rights and interests surrounding proposed and permitted activities.
- The Community Relations team provides information and consultation with a goal of fostering respectful and long-term working relationships between land owners, community and industry participants.
- The Commission continues to work with First Nations and other government agencies to address land and resource management issues.
- The documentation section online includes manuals, guidelines, forms and additional information to support industry in applying for, and operating, oil and gas activities in B.C.
- The report and fact sheet section online provides current information and statistics on pipelines, water, public safety, compliance and enforcement, site restoration and flaring, venting and incinerating.

Oil and Gas Operations Officers at the Commission are designated as Special Conservation Officers under the Environmental Management Act. This designation provides the authority to enforce both the Environmental Management Act and the Water Sustainability Act, and also provides Peace Officer status to the designated officer.

Field Inspectors

Compliance and enforcement inspectors conduct site inspections, respond to incidents, and address complaints from land owners, First Nations, public and other stakeholders.

The Commission inspects on the ground activities including but not limited to geophysical operations, construction, drilling, wells, pipelines, facilities and gas plants, restoration and incidents.

Inspection results are tracked and brought to the attention of the company for action. Inspectors have authority to order corrective work or to shutdown operations not complying with the law.

Non-compliance

If a company is found to have a: (1) high non-compliance issue, it must respond with immediate action; a (2) low non-compliance issue, it has 14-30 days, depending on the issue and associated risk, to deal with the situation to the satisfaction of the Commission.

If a non-compliance issue is not addressed, the company may be subject to further action, including a complete shutdown of the operation. The Commission publishes a quarterly Enforcement Action Summary.