

Emergency Preparedness



Protecting Public Safety

The secure operation of wells, pipelines and facilities is essential for public safety and environmental protection.

The Commission has jurisdiction over most pipelines within provincial boundaries. Many of the regulations and standards are designed specifically to safeguard operations, but permit holders are required to check equipment, train employees and report to the Commission at various stages.

Why Emergency Preparedness?

Natural gas and oil emergencies have the potential to cause damage to the environment and surrounding communities. Preventing emergencies requires preparedness and continuous improvements at every stage of operations.

Operators must adhere to legislative regulations and Commission guidelines as well as industry standards, engineering codes and Canadian Standards. Many of these regulations and standards are designed specifically to safeguard operations and protect the public and the environment.

As detailed in the Commission's mandate and expressed in the mission statement, the **protection of public safety** is a priority. Proven tools include:



Ensuring permit holders have an **emergency response program** and a response contingency plan in place including incident reporting requirements. These plans are reviewed annually to ensure information is current, accurate, meets regulation and reflects best practices.

Requiring permit holders to continually **report to the Commission** before, during and upon completion of oil and gas activities and perform regular tests on equipment and operations.

Providing timely, factual information on pipeline incidents, published in the annual **Pipeline Performance Summary**.

Ensuring a site is completely cleaned up and **remediated by the company**, and all problems are fixed before operations resume, in the event of a spill or release.

Posting quarterly **Enforcement Summaries** and as of April 2017, in an effort to increase transparency, weekly **Enforcement Actions**.

Training and empowering the Commission's teams for **Emergency Management and Compliance and Enforcement** ensures permit holders are following all laws, regulations and permit conditions. Inspections are also triggered by public enquiries and incidents reported to the Commission.

Committing to responding to all **safety-related complaints within one hour**.

Maintaining the Commission's own **Emergency Management Program (EMP)** which includes a 24/7 service to receive incident and complaint calls. The on-call Emergency Officer confirms the severity of the incident or complaint and determines the appropriate level of Commission response.

Enacting the Commission's EMP if public safety is threatened or there is cause for environmental concern, during an emergency. This includes opening the Commission **Emergency Operations Centre** located in Fort St. John. Consistent with provincial and local level emergency management protocol, Commission incident response staff are trained in the Incident Command System (ICS), which is consistent with local government, provincial and industry first responders.



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

What Happens in an Emergency?

In the event of an emergency in B.C., whether due to fire, drought or other natural disaster, the Commission is well equipped to proactively engage with community, operators, emergency teams and government officials.

- ✓ The Commission provides information on its website regarding provincial emergencies affecting oil and gas operators and their employees. Information is posted in partnership with other agencies.
- ✓ The Commission has a 24-hour emergency number for both the public and industry to report oil and gas related incidents. This can also be used during provincial emergencies to report concerns.
- ✓ The Commission's Emergency Operations Centre is ready to respond and provide support whenever needed/required.
- ✓ In the event of an oil and gas emergency, the permit holder's emergency response plan is activated, and a joint Incident Reporting Line with Emergency Management BC is contacted. This ensures the correct organizations are notified, including the Commission.
- ✓ The Commission keeps the public informed and works as an integral part of the emergency response team, including:
 - Receiving incident and complaint reports.
 - Confirming the nature of the emergency.
 - Assessing potential risks.
 - Ensuring permit holders notify appropriate stakeholders.
 - Overseeing of permit holders' response actions.
 - Liaising with and coordinating interagency emergency operations.
 - Providing regular situation updates.
 - Authorizing official stand down of emergency response.
- ✓ All incidents are investigated, assessed and addressed immediately. Guidelines, regulations and standards are updated as needed.



Do You Suspect a Leak?

Natural gas **smells** like rotten eggs or sulphur for a good reason. Once natural gas from the wellhead has been processed into a pure form it is odourless, but a trace amount of mercaptan is added downstream (for home or commercial use) to create a distinctive smell.

The leak may be detected by **sight**. Vapour and/or ground frosting, bubbles in wet or flooded areas, distinct patches of dead vegetation, dust blowing from a hole in the ground, and/or flames if the leak has ignited may be visible.

A natural gas leak may **sound** like a hissing or roaring noise along the right-of-way of a pipeline.

Suspect a leak inside?

- Evacuate the premises leaving the door open.
- Walk to a safe distance and call 911.
- Do not use electrical outlets or items plugged in.
- Do not start any motors or vehicles.
- Do not use lighters or matches.

Suspect a leak outside?

- Keep clear of the area.
- Walk to a safe distance and call 911.
- Do not start any motors or vehicles.
- Do not use lighters or matches.



Call Before You Dig

Pipelines are found in both rural and urban areas. If you dig in the ground there is a risk of encountering buried gas or oil pipelines. BC One Call at **1-800-474-6886** or cellular ***6886**. Always call before you dig.



Public Concerns and Complaints

1-250-794-5200 (24-hour public number)

Report concerns such as odours, spills or noise.



Incident Reporting for Industry

1-800-663-3456 (24-hour emergency number)

Report oil and gas related incidents.