



## Assurance, Compliance, and Enforcement Fact Sheet

This fact sheet focuses on the role of the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) in the inspection of energy activities in Alberta.

### Who is responsible for the inspection of energy facilities in Alberta?

The AER is responsible for inspecting energy resource activities and ensuring all requirements are followed by enforcing the various standards, specifications, and conditions within our authority.

### Why does the AER do inspections?

The AER works to ensure compliance with all requirements through inspections, surveillance activities, early intervention, and education. All of these activities are conducted through the AER's compliance assurance program on behalf of our stakeholders. By conducting inspections, the AER ensures that energy resource activity in Alberta occurs in a manner that is safe, protects the environment, and adheres to all regulatory requirements. For more information about compliance assurance, visit the AER's website at [www.aer.ca](http://www.aer.ca).

### What does the AER inspect?

AER employees carry out inspections on Alberta's oil, natural gas, oil sands, coal, in situ and pipeline activities, and exploration activities, and on public and private lands where energy resource activity occurs. Routine inspections include

- scheduled inspections based on operator history, site sensitivity, and inherent risk of the facility or operation;
- nonscheduled, unannounced inspections based on reports or complaints from the public; and
- inspections to ensure that procedures and equipment are in use to minimize environmental impacts.

The Alberta Energy Regulator ensures the safe, efficient, orderly, and environmentally responsible development of hydrocarbon resources over their entire life cycle. This includes allocating and conserving water resources, managing public lands, and protecting the environment while providing economic benefits for all Albertans.



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## What does the AER inspect?

AER field inspections are prioritized based on the weighting of the following three key criteria, referred to as OSI: operator history, site sensitivity, and inherent risk of the facility or operation or activity.

- **Operator history:** A review of an operator's compliance history to allow AER inspectors to focus more closely on companies with higher levels of noncompliance or unsatisfactory inspections.
- **Site sensitivity:** An evaluation of the area where the operation is taking place for factors such as proximity to the public or bodies of water, and for areas where there have previously been significant public concern with energy resource activities.
- **Inherent risk:** A review of specific technical details about the facility, such as well depth, complexity of the operation, and whether the facility is sweet or sour.

The AER also carries out nonscheduled, unannounced inspections based on reports or complaints from the public, and inspections to ensure that procedures and equipment are in use to minimize environmental impacts.

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## What happens when unsatisfactory items are found during an inspection?

Depending on how serious the problem is, AER inspectors may give the operator time to correct the unsatisfactory items. However, if there is danger to people or the environment, a facility can be immediately shut down or the activity will be ordered to stop until the problem is addressed.

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## What happens if the problems are not corrected?

Where an operator fails to take corrective action, the AER has enforcement tools such as administrative penalties, prosecution, enforcement orders, and the shutting down of an operation until full compliance is demonstrated. The use of these tools depend on the noncompliance identified. For example, a company failing to submit a required monitoring report would face less severe consequences than releasing a toxic substance into the environment, which would result in serious consequences, including the possibility of prosecution.

Also, if an operator is unable or unwilling to correct a problem or take appropriate measures within a specified period, the AER may shut down the facility or order that the activity taking place on the land be stopped.

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## **Where do I call with questions or complaints about a specific site?**

First, call the company's local office and raise your concerns. Company information may be found on the sign outside of the lease. If a company does not rectify your concerns, contact the AER. If you don't know the name of the company, call the Energy and Environmental 24-hour Response Line (1-800-222-6514), explain the problem, and give the location of the well or facility; AER field staff will then make the necessary inquiries.

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## **How are municipalities involved?**

According to the Government of Alberta, municipalities can:

- issue road use permits and charge road inspection fees for overweight vehicles, including oil and gas vehicles;
- specify road and culvert construction standards for site's requiring access to municipal roads; and
- charge well drilling equipment and linear property tax on pipelines.

Municipalities with accreditation can issue building permits for oil and gas infrastructure such as temporary offices and satellite buildings.

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