

An oil and gas well can be a clean, unobtrusive development of property and an asset that supplements home energy needs and boosts family income. Since Ohio has nearly 64,000 oil and gas wells, you may be one of several thousand landowners who has a well on your property.

The majority of oil and gas wells are drilled and produced in a clean and efficient manner. However, poorly operated well sites can waste energy resources, cause safety concerns and environmental damage including soil erosion, and oil or brine contamination of soils and water. As a landowner with a well on your property, you should know that help and advice is available from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Mineral Resources Management (DMRM).

The division regulates Ohio's oil and gas industry to:

- Assure protection of public health, safety and the environment;
- Promote the orderly and efficient development of oil and gas resources; and
- Conserve natural resources.

DMRM maintains a highly visible field presence through a well-qualified staff of inspectors. These individuals witness the crucial aspects of well drilling, construction and plugging to assure that these operations meet the standard set to protect public health, safety and the environment. You may participate in the resource protection process by contacting the appropriate regional office of the Division of Mineral Resources Management if you feel that oil and gas operations on your property or in your area are creating safety risks, environmental problems or wasting energy resources.



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Mineral Resources Management

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Ohio

Oil & Gas Field Enforcement

**Providing for the responsible
development of Ohio's energy
and mineral resources in a safe,
environmentally sound manner**



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Mineral Resources Management

Oil and Gas Field Enforcement Services

If an oil and gas well is located in your area, the division will protect your interests by:

Responding to Citizen Complaints

If you have a complaint or question, the division will respond to your call within 24 hours either by telephone or in person. Inspectors are available to respond immediately to emergencies, such as well or tank fires, that are a threat to public health or safety. The following are some of the most common complaints to which the division responds.

- **OIL SPILLS** – Division inspectors respond to reported oil spills and coordinate remediation of contaminated streams or ponds with the Ohio EPA and the ODNR Division of Wildlife.
- **GAS LEAKS** – Oil and gas regulations prohibit leakage of gas from wells or production equipment.
- **BRINE DISPOSAL** – Oil and gas law prohibits the discharge of brine, a highly saline by-product of oil and gas drilling and production, into soils, surface or ground waters.
- **SAFETY** – Wells and oil storage tanks (constructed after 1969) must be located more than 100 feet from any inhabited structure, and more than 50 feet from the traveled portion of a road.
- **IDLE WELLS** – Wells which are, or become incapable of producing oil or gas in commercial quantities must be properly plugged, unless the well is supplying gas for domestic use, or is being used for some other lawful purpose.
- **WELL OR TANK FIRES** – When a fire occurs, the local fire department should be called. However, division inspectors often assist firefighters by advising them about potential hazards and serving as a liaison between the firefighters and the well owner.

Inspecting Well Drilling Operations

Division inspectors witness critical phases of well drilling operations to ensure your safety and the protection of soil and water resources.

Inspecting Well Plugging Operations

Ohio well plugging regulations state that upon abandonment, every well must be plugged in a manner that confines oil, gas or water in the reservoir rock in which it occurs or originates.

Well owners are required to notify division inspectors before beginning plugging operations. Before a well plugging operation starts, division inspectors must approve plugging materials, methods and a plugging plan for each well based upon records of site-specific geology and well construction.

Inspecting Restoration Approval

After a well is drilled or plugged, the owner is required by law to restore the site within the following time frames:

- Five months from the date drilling began, the well owner/agent shall empty and fill in all pits;

- Nine months from the date drilling began, the well owner/agent shall plant, seed or sod the land disturbed, where necessary, to bind the soil and prevent substantial erosion and sedimentation;
- Six months after a well is plugged for abandonment, the well owner/agent shall remove all storage structures, supplies and equipment, fill in remaining excavations and grade or terrace and plant, seed or sod the land disturbed, where necessary, to bind the soil and prevent substantial erosion and sedimentation.

Enforcing the Law to Correct Violations

When a well owner fails to meet requirements established by law, DMRM has a variety of enforcement options to gain compliance. The division generally maintains a standard operating procedure of escalating enforcement measures from informal to formal, depending upon the nature of the violation. When informal measures are unsuccessful or a violation endangers public health and safety or the owner demonstrates flagrant disregard for the law, more formal enforcement measures are used. The division chief has the authority to issue orders or file civil or criminal enforcement actions, if necessary, to correct a violation.

Regional Offices - Division of Mineral Resources Management

North Region:

New Philadelphia 330-339-2207

Salem 330-222-1527

Uniontown 330-896-0616

South Region:

Cambridge 740-439-9079

Jackson 740-286-6411

West Region:

Lebanon 513-933-6717\6718

Mt. Vernon 740-392-4499

Napoleon 419-599-0058

Columbus 614-265-6633

