

# Conservation and Reclamation INFORMATION LETTER

## Sample Abandonment Letter for Wellsites

### BACKGROUND

In February and March 1998, public meetings were held in 10 locations throughout Alberta to get input from the public, industry and government stakeholders on reclamation criteria and the certification process for wellsites. Following the public meetings, a Steering Committee with representatives from industry, government and the agricultural community reviewed the results and proposed future action. In October 1999 the Ministers of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Environment released the Steering Committee's final report and recommendations to improve the certification process.

This Information Letter deals with Recommendations 6 and 10 in the final report. These recommendations provided for industry to notify landowners that a well is being abandoned, prior to closure of the well.

### RESPONSE

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), with input from the Steering Committee, developed a sample abandonment letter that operators can send to landowners. A modified version of the sample is attached to this Information Letter.

This letter allows operators to meet the intent of the recommendation to improve awareness of the abandonment process.

The sample abandonment letter indicates that landowners are welcome to discuss the abandonment and reclamation process with the operator; to visit the site during reclamation; and, to attend the inquiry.

Government inspectors give industry, landowners and occupants 5 days notice of the inquiry so they can attend.

Alberta Environment expects abandonment letters to be issued for all wellsites being abandoned.

### QUESTIONS

*Is this the only acceptable format for the letter?*

No, this is a sample. The letter may be changed but the general information shown in the sample should be in the final version.

Another version of the letter is available on the CAPP website at <http://www.capp.ca>

A third version is available from the Alberta Surface Rights Federation, Box 55, Round Hill, Alberta T0B 3Z0.

*Who gets the letter?*

On private land, the landowner and the occupant should be given a copy of the letter. On White Area public land, the occupant and the public land manager should be given a copy of the letter.

No letter is required for wellsites on Green Area public land.

*Is this a regulatory requirement?*

This is not a regulatory requirement, but landowners and occupants will be expecting to get the letter. Industry members on the Steering Committee supported this initiative to improve communication with landowners about wellsite activities on their land.

*Who do I contact if a well on my land is being abandoned and I don't get a copy of the letter?*

Contact the wellsite operator first. If this does not produce results, contact your local Conservation and Reclamation Inspector. The inspector will inform the operator of the industry initiative to provide this information.

If necessary, the industry associations will be asked to speak to their member companies about the importance of this initiative to industry.

### CONTACTS

#### For Green Area public lands:

Alberta Environment,  
Land Administration Division,  
3rd Floor, 9915 - 108 Street,  
EDMONTON, Alberta T5K 2G8.

Phone: (780) 427-3570  
Fax: (780) 422-1185

#### For White Area public lands:

Alberta Agriculture, Food and  
Rural Development,  
Public Land Management Division,  
Room 200, J. G. O'Donoghue Building,  
7000 - 113 Street,  
EDMONTON, Alberta T6H 5T6.

Phone: (780) 427-6597  
Fax: (780) 422-4244

#### For all other lands:

Alberta Environment,  
Environmental Sciences Division,  
4th Floor, 9820-106 Street,  
EDMONTON, Alberta T5K 2J6

Phone: (780) 427-5883  
Fax: (780) 422-4192

e-mail: [land.management@gov.ab.ca](mailto:land.management@gov.ab.ca)

# ***SAMPLE***

Dear Mr. & Mrs.

Re: Abandonment of well at XX-XX-XXX-XX-WX  
SW Sec. xx Twp. xxx Rge. xx WxM

**Oil and Gas Company** is in the process of abandoning and reclaiming the wellsite/access road as noted above.

The subsurface abandonment work will be performed to Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) standards and the surface reclamation component will conform to standards outlined by the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. We invite your comments during this process and, subject to safety concerns, welcome you to check out the reclamation operation. Further information on the abandonment and reclamation process follows:

- A service rig will abandon the well and all surface facilities will be removed from the site.
- A qualified representative will check depth of topsoil cover, soil composition, vegetative growth, topography (drainage) adjacent to the lease. Also examined will be compaction and the possible presence of contaminants on the lease site and, if necessary, off the lease site.
- A remediation program (if contaminants are found) and a reclamation program are then developed based on the above findings. If you wish, these programs will be discussed with you and we invite your comments. The site will be remediated (if required) and reclaimed.
- When the reclamation work is complete we will do an extensive site assessment to evaluate topsoil depth, compaction, soil composition, vegetative growth and topography (drainage).
- When our qualified representative determines that the site meets the government's wellsite reclamation criteria, we will apply to the government for a reclamation certificate. A copy of the application for the reclamation certificate will be forwarded to you at that time.
- The government reclamation inspector will schedule an on-site inquiry after receipt of our completed application. Notification of this inquiry will be provided by the government reclamation inspector to yourself and to us in order that we all may be present at the inquiry.
- When the site passes an inquiry the reclamation inspector issues a reclamation certificate. A copy of the reclamation certificate will be sent to you as well as to us. If the site fails at the inquiry the reclamation inspector will indicate which criteria have not been met and set a timeline in which to rectify the situation. The reclamation inspector may require us to submit a new application.
- Upon receipt of a reclamation certificate we will surrender the lease, withdraw and discharge the caveat from the title and all future compensation, payable under the terms of the surface lease, will cease. A letter advising you of our surrender of the lease will be sent to you.

**Oil and Gas Company remains responsible if further work is necessary to conserve and reclaim the land and the work relates to matters that were not apparent to the inspector at the time of the issuance of the reclamation certificate. This responsibility continues for five years after the issuance of the reclamation certificate in the case of a well and twenty-five years in the case of a plant. Oil and Gas Company remains responsible for any contamination that may be caused as a result of our operations on the land.**

Please direct any questions to the undersigned at (403) \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your co-operation in these matters.