

Backgrounder

Alberta's Upstream Oil and Gas Reclamation and Remediation Program ensures that land used for oil and gas development is restored to a productive state.

The program, developed in consultation with landowners, industry and other affected stakeholders, requires all upstream oil and gas sites on private and public land, to be reclaimed when a site is no longer productive.

Program Details

- Application packages can be submitted year-round for consideration to either Alberta Environment for private land or Alberta Sustainable Resource Development for public land.
- Applications must contain information on subsurface contamination and surface assessment.
- Applications must show that private landowners/occupants have received copies of all documentation related to land reclamation and remediation.
- Field audits are conducted at approximately 15% of all certified sites to ensure reclamation criteria and remediation requirements are met.
- Reclamation certificates can be cancelled should an audit or complaint investigation demonstrate that a certified site does not comply with Alberta Environment standards.
- All complaints are fully investigated by Alberta Environment.
- Landowners receive a form that will assist with organizing, documenting, and filing complaints related to reclamation activities.
- The industry liability period for surface reclamation issues (topography, vegetation, soil texture, drainage etc.) is 25 years and lifetime liability for contamination.
- Alberta Environment will review the program annually and work with stakeholders to improve the program.
- Annual performance measures will provide an ongoing evaluation of the program.

Program Evaluation

Four performance measures will provide an ongoing evaluation of the program enhancements. The current results will act as base indicators for annual evaluations of the program.

The performance measures evaluate Alberta Environment's capacity to process reclamation certificates, industry compliance with reclamation and remediation requirements, and industry consultation with landowners.

The indicators include:

- The ratio of certified upstream oil and gas wellsites and production sites to abandoned upstream oil and gas sites.
- The percentage of applications that receive a reclamation certificate.
- The percentage of randomly selected sites that pass the field audit.
- The percentage of applications accompanied by an "Acknowledgement of Information Disclosure" form voluntarily completed by landowners.

Additionally, Alberta Environment is engaged in ongoing multi-stakeholder consultations to improve the program. The department is currently working on implementing several recommendations received by a multi-stakeholder committee formed to provide guidance on the Upstream Oil and Gas Reclamation and Remediation Program.