

AESTHETIC AND NOISE CONTROL REGULATIONS

801. INTRODUCTION

The rules and regulations in this section are promulgated to control aesthetics and noise impacts during the drilling, completion and operation of oil and gas wells and production facilities. Any Colorado county, home rule or statutory city, town, territorial charter city or city and county may, by application to the Commission, seek a determination that the rules and regulations in this section, or any individual rule or regulation, shall not apply to oil and gas activities occurring within the boundaries, or any part thereof, of any Colorado county, home rule or statutory city, town, territorial charter city or city and county, such determination to be based upon a showing by any Colorado county, home rule or statutory city, town, territorial charter city or city and county that, because of conditions existing therein, the enforcement of these rules and regulations is not necessary within the boundaries of any Colorado county, home rule or statutory city, town, territorial charter city or city and county for the protection of public health, safety and welfare.

802. NOISE ABATEMENT

a. The goal of this rule is to identify noise sources related to oil and gas operations that impact surrounding landowners and to implement cost-effective and technically-feasible mitigation measures to bring oil and gas facilities into compliance with the allowable noise levels identified in subsection c. Operators should be aware that noise control is most effectively addressed at the siting and design phase, especially with respect to centralized compression and other downstream "gas facilities" (see definition in the 100 Series of these rules).

b. Oil and gas operations at any well site, production facility or gas facility, shall comply with the following maximum permissible noise levels. Operations involving pipeline or gas facility installation or maintenance, the use of a drilling rig, completion rig, workover rig, or stimulation is subject to the maximum permissible noise levels for industrial zones. The type of land use of the surrounding area shall be determined by the Commission in consultation with the local governmental designee taking into consideration any applicable zoning or other local land use designation.

c. In the hours between 7:00 a.m. and the next 7:00 p.m. the noise levels permitted below may be increased ten (10) db(A) for a period not to exceed fifteen (15) minutes in any one (1) hour period. The allowable noise level for periodic, impulsive or shrill noises is reduced by five (5) db(A) from the levels shown.

ZONE	7:00 am to next 7:00 pm	7:00 pm to next 7:00 am
Residential/Agricultural/Rural	55 db(A)	50 db(A)
Commercial	60 db(A)	55 db(A)
Light industrial	70 db(A)	65 db(A)
Industrial	80 db(A)	75 db(A)

In remote locations, where there is no reasonably proximate occupied structure or designated outside activity area, the light industrial standard may be applicable.

Pursuant to Commission inspection or upon receiving a complaint from a nearby property owner or local governmental designee regarding noise related to oil and gas operations, the Commission shall conduct an onsite investigation and take sound measurements as prescribed herein.

The following provide guidance for the measurement of sound levels and assignment of points of compliance for oil and gas operations:

(1) Sound levels shall be measured at a distance of three hundred and fifty (350) feet from the noise source. At the request of the complainant, the sound level shall also be measured at a point beyond three hundred fifty (350) feet that the complainant believes is more representative of the noise impact. If an oil and gas well site, production facility or gas facility is installed closer than three hundred fifty (350) feet from an existing occupied structure, sound levels shall be measured at a point twenty-five (25) feet from the structure towards the noise source. Noise levels from oil and gas facilities located on surface property owned, leased or otherwise controlled by the operator shall be measured at three hundred and fifty (350) feet or at the property line, whichever is greater.

In situations where measurement of noise levels at three hundred and fifty (350) feet is impractical or unrepresentative due to topography, the measurement may be taken at a lesser distance and extrapolated to a 350-foot equivalent using the following formula:

$$db(A)_{DISTANCE\ 2} = db(A)_{DISTANCE\ 1} - 20 \times \log_{10}(distance\ 2/distance\ 1)$$

(2) Sound level meters shall be equipped with wind screens, and readings taken when the wind velocity at the time and place of measurement is not more than five (5) miles per hour.

(3) Sound level measurements shall be taken four (4) feet above ground level.

(4) Sound levels shall be determined by averaging minute-by-minute measurements made over a minimum fifteen (15) minute sample duration if practicable. The sample shall be taken under conditions that are representative of the noise experienced by the complainant (e.g., at night, morning, evening, or during special weather conditions).

(5) In all sound level measurements, the existing ambient noise level from all other sources in the encompassing environment at the time and place of such sound level measurement shall be considered to determine the contribution to the sound level by the oil and gas operation(s).

d. In situations where the complaint or Commission onsite inspection indicates that low frequency noise is a component of the problem, the Commission shall obtain a sound level measurement twenty-five (25) feet from the exterior wall of the residence or occupied structure nearest to the noise source, using a noise meter calibrated to the db(C) scale. If this reading exceeds 65 db(C), the Commission shall require the operator to obtain a low frequency noise impact analysis by a qualified sound expert, including identification of any reasonable control measures available to mitigate such low frequency noise impact. Such study shall be provided to the Commission for consideration and possible action.

e. Exhaust from all engines, motors, coolers and other mechanized equipment shall be vented in a direction away from all occupied buildings.

f. All facilities within four hundred (400) feet of occupied buildings with engines or motors which are not electrically operated shall be equipped with quiet design mufflers or equivalent. All mufflers shall be properly installed and maintained in proper working order.

803. LIGHTING

To the extent practicable, site lighting shall be directed downward and internally so as to avoid glare on public roads and occupied buildings within seven hundred (700) feet.

804. VISUAL IMPACT MITIGATION

Production facilities constructed or substantially repainted after May 30, 1992 which are observable from any public highway shall be painted with uniform, non-contrasting, non-reflective color tones, (similar to the Munsell Soil Color Coding System) and with colors matched to but slightly darker than the surrounding landscape.