

Who Has Jurisdiction Over the Clean-up of Wastes from Oil and Gas Activities in Texas?

The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) has primary regulatory jurisdiction over the oil and gas industry in the state. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is the environmental agency for the state. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the RRC and TCEQ provides additional explanation of the agencies' jurisdictions over various oil and gas activities. The MOU can be found in Title 16 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 3.30 Memorandum of Understanding between the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Title 16, Part 1, Chapter 3, Section 3.30).

In general, wastes from oil- and gas-related activities are regulated by the RRC:

- Hazardous and non-hazardous wastes associated with the exploration, development, or production of oil and gas
- Injection wells to dispose of oil and gas wastes
- Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM) waste from oil and gas activities
- Wastes from transportation by pipeline and storage of crude oil (including tank bottoms) before it enters a refinery
- Wastes from the transportation of natural gas by pipeline prior to use in the manufacturing process or residential/industrial use
- Non-hazardous wastes from natural gas processing plants
- Wastes from vacuum truck rinsate and tank rinsate generated at facilities operated by oil and gas waste haulers permitted by the RRC

For more information on RRC-regulated waste, call 877-228-5740.

The TCEQ has jurisdiction over:

- Wastes associated with transportation of crude oil and natural gas by railcar, truck, barge, or oil tanker and refined petroleum products by pipeline.
- Wastes generated at oil field service facilities that provide equipment, materials, or services to the oil and gas industry.
- Wastes from oil and gas activities that are processed, treated, or disposed of at a solid waste management facility authorized by the TCEQ.

For more information on TCEQ-regulated waste, email ihwper@tceq.texas.gov

Resources and Useful Links

- Information regarding the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Underground Injection Control Permits and Registrations can be found at https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/waste_permits/uic_permits/uic.html.
- TCEQ's Oil & Gas Facilities: Compliance Resources webpage (<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assistance/industry/oil-and-gas>) covers regulations on air, water, and waste related to the oil and gas industry in Texas.
- For RRC Injection and Disposal Wells Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), go to <https://www.rrc.texas.gov/about-us/faqs/oil-gas-faq/injection-and-disposal-wells-faqs/>
- The RRC's Injection/Disposal Well Permitting, Testing, and Monitoring Manual can be found at <https://www.rrc.texas.gov/oil-and-gas/publications-and-notices/manuals/injection-storage-manual/>
- Information regarding the Railroad Commissions Site Remediation Program <https://www.rrc.texas.gov/oil-and-gas/environmental-cleanup-programs/site-remediation/>
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Protecting Underground Sources of Drinking Water from Underground Injection (UIC) website is <https://www.epa.gov/uic>.
- Drawings of the different UIC well types can be found on each of their individual webpages (Class I – VI) at https://www.epa.gov/uic/general-information-about-injection-wells#how_protect.
- The U.S. EPA SDWA website is <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa>
- The Ground Water Protection Council website providing information and links relating to wells, underground injection practices, and groundwater protection is <https://www.gwpc.org>.
- The Texas Groundwater Protection Committee (TGPC) Oil, Gas, and Mining webpage has additional information and links on this subject at <https://tgpc.texas.gov/oil-gas-mining>.

Other Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

To find additional FAQs visit the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee's FAQ webpage at <https://tgpc.texas.gov/frequently-asked-questions-faqs/>.