



You may think all our air pollution comes from here.

THINK AGAIN

Air Pollution is released at all stages of oil and gas operations, from exploration and drilling to processing. Natural gas and associated byproducts are released during venting, dehydration, gas processing, compression, leaks from equipment (fugitive emissions), and when wastes are brought to the surface and evaporated from open pits.

Regulations fall short. In most states oil and gas facilities are not required to obtain air quality permits, nor have strict emission controls, unless they exceed a specified volume of emissions or engine size. Since most individual well sites do not meet the permit threshold they are not required to have air permits. Consequently, the type and amount air pollutants from tens of thousands of well sites across the country are not known, and will remain unknown until regulations are improved.

Potential
Health
Impacts

asthma • cancer • neurological damage •
pulmonary reduction • coronary problems •
endocrine disruption • headaches

TYPICAL CONTAMINANTS

- **Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)**, include benzene, toluene, formaldehyde, and many other harmful substances. They combine with NO_x to form ground level ozone.
- **Benzene**, a VOC often released during venting and dehydration, is known to cause cancer.
- **Methane (CH_4)**, a VOC, is a powerful greenhouse gas.
- **Hydrogen sulfide (H_2S)** may be released by flaring and venting. Is harmful at low levels and fatal at high levels.
- **Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)** are released during flaring and burning of diesel fuel or natural gas. They combine with VOCs to form ground level ozone.
- **Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)** are present in oil and gas formations, and are produced when hydrocarbons are burned. Some PAHs cause cancer.
- **Sulfur dioxide (SO_2)** is released when natural gas and diesel are burned. It contributes to particulate pollution and acid rain.
- **Particulate matter** is produced by exhaust fumes, dust and other air emissions. These small particles get lodged in the lungs and may lead to many health problems.



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