



The City of Aurora and the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) are working to provide a framework for responsible exploration and production of oil and gas resources. The city and state are also committed to protecting the public health, safety, welfare and environment of the city.

## OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q: What is the city doing to address oil and gas exploration within the city?**

A: The City of Aurora has the authority to address land-use impacts within its jurisdiction. It continues to work on local land-use concerns to protect the community and environment through the following avenues:

1. Work with the oil and gas companies to comply with the city's oil and gas ordinance to ensure land use issues are addressed including such items as truck traffic, lighting, signs and noise.
2. We require notification of property owners within one-half mile of a proposed well site before drilling begins. We also notify registered neighborhood groups that are within one mile of a proposed well site before drilling permits are issued by the city.
3. Use the COGCC's local government designee process and the city's oil and gas permit review process to address specific concerns for each permit application.
4. We have organized an Oil and Gas Committee, composed of operators, service owners, city staff, and neighborhood representatives to share information regarding current and pending drilling activity and any associated impacts.

### **Q: Can the city prohibit drilling within the city limits?**

A: No. The city does not have the authority to ban oil and gas drilling. Drilling is regulated by the COGCC and the city.

### **Q: What is fracking and how can I learn more?**

A: Hydraulic fracturing or fracking has been used by the natural gas and oil industry since the 1940s. The COGCC, managed by the State of Colorado, is a great resource for detailed information about fracking, why it's done, how it's regulated and more. Visit the following [link](#) to learn more.

### **Q: Can the city prohibit or ban fracking within the city?**

A: No. The city does not have the authority to prohibit fracking. Fracking is regulated by the COGCC. Please see the city's oil and gas resources page for additional information about the fracking process.

### **Q: Can the city control what is used in fracking fluid?**

A: No. The city does not have the authority to regulate what happens below the surface. Fracking fluids and the fracking process are regulated by the COGCC.

### **Q: Who issues oil and gas exploration permits?**

A: The COGCC issues oil and gas exploration permits, including seismic permits, drilling and spacing plans and drilling permits. Before drilling begins the city also issues an oil and gas drilling permit.

### **Q: If I have questions or concerns, what can I do?**

A: If you have questions or concerns about land-use regulations such as noise, setbacks, roads and other environmental issues within the city please call or leave a message at 303-739-7185 to learn more about the city's role with oil and gas regulation.

If you have questions or concerns regarding oil and gas drilling or fracking, please contact the COGCC at 303-894-2100 or visit their website.

If you have concerns that your water well has been impacted by oil and gas drilling or fracking, please contact the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment at 303-692-3500. You may also contact the COA Local Government Designee, Jim Sayre at 303-739-7185.

**Q: What is water well testing?**

A: Testing water from your well is always a good idea whether or not oil and gas development is anticipated. There are a number of water pollutants such as coliform bacteria or nitrates/nitrites which are serious pollutants but have no connection to oil and gas development. If you have your well tested, for any reason, these should be included in the testing. The COGCC has also recently adopted a water quality testing program in regards to oil and gas drilling. See the COGCC website for additional information. The primary source for information about water testing and pollution is the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

**Q: Who administers water well permits?**

A: Water well permits and ground water rights are administered by the State Division of Water Resources which is also known as the **State Engineer’s Office**. The links on that page will explain all there is to know about domestic water wells and the permitting or documentation and registration process.

**Q: What are mineral rights?**

A: Mineral rights may or may not be held by the same owner as the surface rights. A previous owner may have “severed” all or part of the minerals from the surface.

If a surface owner does not know whether he or she owns any or all of the mineral rights the first places they should look are their deed and title insurance policy. These are not definitive but will be a good starting place. To be absolutely sure it will be necessary to have an attorney do a Title Opinion.

In some cases all or part of the mineral rights may still be held by the federal government because they were never transferred when the property was originally patented under the various Homestead Acts.

If approached by someone wanting to lease minerals or who wants a surface use agreement it is suggested that a landowner consult with an attorney. Probably the most important parts of either a mineral lease or surface use agreements are the surface restoration provisions and any royalties.

**Q: What is seismic exploration?**

A: Seismic exploration is conducted by a number of companies. Seismic permits are issued by the state. Essentially, it is the use of sound waves to explore and map oil and gas reservoirs. Sound is generated either by the use of “thumper trucks” or other means.

**Q: Is oil and gas drilling happening near my home.**

A: Please see the following map of city approved drilling permit locations.

**Q: Who do we contact for more information?**

A: For information on state drilling and fracking regulations, contact the **COGCC** online at COGCC or at 303-894-2100.

**For information about Oil and Gas Exploration in the COA: Visit [www.auroragov.org](http://www.auroragov.org) and click on “City Planning/Oil and Gas.”**

**For additional resources refer to the following table provided by the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission**

TOPIC	AGENCY/WEBSITE	PHONE #
<b>Dig Safely Program</b>	Utility Notification Center of Colorado <a href="http://www.uncc.org">www.uncc.org</a>	1-800-922-1987
<b>Gas Pipelines</b>	Public Utilities Commission <a href="http://www.dora.state.co.us/puc">www.dora.state.co.us/puc</a>	303-894-2000
<b>Geological Maps and Publications</b>	Colorado Geological Survey <a href="http://geosurvey.state.co.us">http://geosurvey.state.co.us</a>	303-866-2611
<b>Oil and Gas Severance Tax</b>	Department of Revenue I <a href="http://www.revenue.state.co.us/fyi/html/generl04.htm">www.revenue.state.co.us/fyi/html/generl04.htm</a>	303-238-7378
<b>Produced Water</b>	CDPHE/Water Quality Control Division	303-692-3524
<b>Discharge Permits</b>	<a href="http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/index.html">www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/index.html</a>	
<b>Air Emissions Permits</b>	CDPHE/Air Pollution Control Division <a href="http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ap/index.html">www.cdphe.state.co.us/ap/index.html</a>	303-692-3216
<b>Service Stations (inspections, complaints, etc.)</b>	CLDE/Division of Oil and Public Safety <a href="http://oil.cdle.state.co.us">http://oil.cdle.state.co.us</a>	303-388-4967
<b>State Oil and Gas Leases/Auctions</b>	State Land Board <a href="http://www.trustlands.state.co.us">www.trustlands.state.co.us</a>	303-866-3454
<b>Fuel Storage Tanks</b>	CDLE/Division of Oil and Public Safety <a href="http://oil.cdle.state.co.us">http://oil.cdle.state.co.us</a>	303-318-8507