



## Emergency Planning, Preparedness, and Response Fact sheet

The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) has effective processes and strong regulations in place that, when followed, ensure that AER-regulated development is conducted safely. This fact sheet outlines how the AER ensures that oil and gas companies meet emergency planning, preparedness, and response requirements. For more information, visit [www.aer.ca](http://www.aer.ca).

### What is emergency planning, preparedness, and response?

Emergency planning, preparedness, and response is a comprehensive system of managing an incident, should one occur. The activities in this system are grouped into categories that usually include mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The major components are

- planning and preparedness, which includes an emergency response plan (ERP)—a regularly updated document that records critical information and emergency response procedures necessary in the event of an emergency—and training and exercises;
- response activities, which focus on addressing an incident already under way and can include such measures as notifying the public, evacuating residents, and controlling wells.

Many response measures are detailed in ERPs and are coordinated with the Government of Alberta, the AER, the RCMP, and local authorities.

### How does the AER ensure that companies can respond to emergencies?

The AER's *Directive 071: Emergency Preparedness and Response* directs licensees to have an appropriate level of emergency preparedness measures in place. It defines

- when ERPs are needed,
- ERP content and maintenance schedules,
- public and government agency involvement,
- consultation and notification requirements,
- frequency of ERP exercises, and
- direction on calculating response zones.

The Alberta Energy Regulator ensures the safe, efficient, orderly, and environmentally responsible development of hydrocarbon resources over their entire life cycle. This includes allocating and conserving water resources, managing public lands, and protecting the environment while providing economic benefits for all Albertans.



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## How does the company involve the public?

A company must directly consult with all people residing within an emergency planning zone (EPZ) when it creates the ERP. The company must provide an information package to residents and seek their input. As a result of this process, an EPZ may be modified. The public must be given enough information to understand a proposed or existing operation, the impact a potential emergency may have on them, the procedures in place to respond to an emergency, and public protection measures.

An application cannot proceed until the consultation process is complete. Once a well or pipeline begins operations, the AER requires that ERPs be regularly maintained. Public involvement must continue throughout the life of a project to ensure that ERPs are current and residents are notified about ongoing operations.

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## Is an ERP necessary?

An ERP defines the actions a company must take during an emergency. In addition, it details the emergency response resources available to the company, outlines roles and responsibilities of all responders, and describes how the company will work with various government agencies during an incident. The AER holds licensees responsible for responses to incidents. A response might include assistance from a number of other sources, such as government agencies or other licensees operating in the region.

In Alberta, each company licensed by the AER must, as a minimum, have a corporate-level ERP to cover all of its operations in the province. In certain circumstances, as detailed in *Directive 071*, ERPs specific to an operation must be developed and submitted to the AER for review. These ERPs contain details relevant to the specific operations and area in which the operations are conducted, and they must be approved prior to commencement of operations.

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## How am I protected if an emergency occurs?

There are several ways the AER ensures that your safety is protected. First, the AER has many regulations designed to prevent incidents from occurring. If an incident does occur, protection measures include notifying people in the EPZ, sheltering in place, evacuation of the EPZ, and ignition of the release.

The actions taken during an emergency depend on several factors, including the type of oil and gas operation, current weather conditions, and proximity to residents.

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## **What is an incident?**

The AER defines an incident as an unexpected occurrence or event requiring action by response personnel to prevent or minimize impacts on people, property, and the environment.

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## **How does the AER respond to an incident?**

The AER is committed to protecting the public and the environment, and it monitors and responds to energy-related incidents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. AER staff assist, coordinate, and support the activities of the responsible operator, as well as the local municipal authority and other provincial and federal responders, to ensure a coordinated, effective response and that AER requirements are followed. If an incident occurs, an operator must be prepared to respond quickly and effectively to protect the health, safety, and welfare of people and limit damage to property and the environment. Should an operator be inadequately prepared or incapable of handling an incident, the AER has staff trained in emergency response, environmental protection, air quality, and investigation; they are able to assume control of response activities.

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## **How do I contact the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) in case of an incident?**

If you witness an energy or environmental emergency or have a complaint about the operation of an energy development (such as odour or noise), phone 1-800-222-6514. The AER and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) use this number for all complaints and emergencies related to the environment and energy development in Alberta. The compliance officers who answer the 24-hour response line notify the appropriate agency and, if the situation warrants, dispatch emergency responders.

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## **Where can I find out more information about AER incident response?**

**Visit:** [www.aer.ca](http://www.aer.ca)

**Call:** 1-855-297-8311

**E-mail:** [inquiries@aer.ca](mailto:inquiries@ aer.ca)

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