

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Environmental Protection Performance Standards at Oil and Gas Well Sites

Site Restoration

(25 Pa. Code § 78a.65)

The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is to address questions about site restoration requirements. This FAQ should not be used in lieu of reference to the 2012 Oil and Gas Act, 25 Pa. Code Chapter 78a and other applicable laws and regulations. The answers outlined in this FAQ are intended to supplement existing requirements. Nothing in this document shall affect statutory or regulatory requirements.

This document is not an adjudication or a regulation. There is no intent on the part of the Department to give this document that weight or deference. The Department may supplement or amend this document at any time as necessary without notice.

Well Site Restoration Extension Request

1. When is a Well Site Restoration Extension required?

As per §3216(g) of the 2012 Oil and Gas Act and § 78a.65 (c), a well owner or operator can request an extension from the restoration timeframes either: 9 months after completion of drilling all permitted wells on the well site in accordance with §78a.65 (a)(1); 9 months after plugging the final well on the well site in accordance with §78a.65 (a)(2); or 9 months after expiration of well permit where wells not drilled in accordance with §78a.65 (a)(3), if the extension will result in less earth disturbance, increased water reuse or more efficient development of the resources or if restoration cannot be achieved due to adverse weather conditions or a lack of essential fuel, equipment or labor. In order to provide enough time for Department staff to process Well Site Extension Requests, the operator should submit the request within 6 months of completing drilling or plugging the final well or expiration of wells not drilled as stated in §78a.65(c)(1). (posted 3/20/2026)

2. What is the process for acquiring a restoration extension request approval?

A well owner or operator should submit the Well Site Restoration Extension Request form (8000-FM-OOGM0131U), electronically through the DEP Greenport not more than 6 months after the completion of drilling. Completion of drilling is achieved when the wellbore was finished/completed with casing and cemented, and all laterals are drilled as authorized by the permit or a decision has been made to drill no further under an authorization. The request must specify the reasons for the extension. The Department may extend the restoration period one time, not to exceed 24 months. (posted 3/20/2026)

3. What is an interim Site Restoration plan?

If a well owner or operator requests an extension of the restoration timeframe because the extension may result in less earth disturbance, increased water reuse or more efficient development of the resources, the well owner or operator must develop an interim site restoration plan. The interim site restoration plan must demonstrate that the site will be:

- a) stabilized in accordance with §102.22, Site Stabilization;
- b) site-specific PCSM SCMs will be utilized to manage post construction stormwater;
and
- c) portions of the well site that are not occupied by production equipment will be restored to approximate original conditions.

The well owner or operator can develop and submit an interim site restoration plan as part of an ESCGP NOI. The well owner or operator can either use the interim site restoration plan that was part of the approved ESCGP or develop a restoration plan that meets the requirements of §102.22 (relating to site stabilization).

If the ESCGP's interim site restoration plan shows a pad large enough to accommodate more wells and equipment than currently exist, a new restoration plan should be developed to address the pad size needed for the number of wells actually drilled and their corresponding equipment, buffers, etc. until the remaining wells can be drilled.
(posted 3/20/2026)

4. Who is responsible for the operation and maintenance of PCSM SCMs on the site during the extension period?

The well owner or operator remains responsible for the long-term operation and maintenance of all PCSM SCMs at the site during the restoration extension period.
(posted 3/20/2026)