



METHANE POLLUTION STANDARD

FACT SHEET

Why Are EPA's Methane Standards for Oil and Gas Operations Important?

- Methane is an especially potent climate pollutant; it packs more than 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over a 20-year timeframe. One quarter of the climate disruption we're experiencing today comes from methane pollution.
- The U.S. loses over \$1 billion worth of natural gas every year through methane leaks and intentional releases throughout the oil and gas system. This is enough natural gas to meet the heating and cooking needs of over 5 million American homes.
- Methane is released along with toxic and smog-forming pollutants such as volatile organic compounds, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene. The same technologies that reduce methane also limit these other harmful pollutants.
- Before the EPA used the Clean Air Act to create the New Source Performance Standards for oil and gas in 2016, there were no national limits on methane pollution from oil and gas operations.



Under the President Obama's *Climate Action Plan: Strategy to Reduce Methane Emissions* and the Clean Air Act, the EPA issued final updates to the NSPS that curb emissions of methane and volatile organic compounds from additional new, modified and reconstructed sources in the oil and gas industry. These updates were finalized in May 2016 and:

- Address methane and volatile organic compounds from new and modified sources in the oil and gas industry.
- Contain guidelines for existing oil and gas sources in ozone nonattainment areas to help restore healthy air in those communities.
- Employ highly cost effective, available technologies that have already been successfully deployed in oil and gas producing states like Colorado.

EPA's current standards require sources to:

- Find and repair leaks,
- Capture natural gas from hydraulically fractured oil wells,
- Limit emissions from pneumatic controllers and pumps, and
- Limit emissions from compressors.



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What are the Costs and Benefits of the Rules?

- In 2025, EPA estimates that that the rule will have benefits between \$460 million and \$550 million. EPA expects benefits to outweigh costs by \$120 million - \$150 million.
- These estimates don't include the health benefits of reductions in other pollutants, including smog-forming compounds and air toxics.
- Low cost solutions are readily available and have already been deployed in key states. A recent study by ICF International estimated that companies could cut methane emissions by 40 percent or more for about one quarter of one percent of the price of the gas they're selling, or about one penny per thousand cubic feet. That means \$3.00 worth of gas would now cost \$3.01.
- Many of these technologies capture gas that would otherwise be wasted, ultimately saving producers money.
- These proposed pollution control measures will save the gas industry \$30 million per year by preventing waste of natural gas.
- Pollution reduced by methane standards help address the approximately 750,000 childhood asthma attacks, 2,000 asthma-related emergency room visits, and 600 hospital admissions each year that are linked to the oil and gas pollution

Citations

- <http://www.methanefacts.org/files/2015/09/MWG-Methane-Pollution-Standard-Backgrounder.pdf>

