

# THE REGULATION OF HYDRAULIC FRACTURING: AN OVERVIEW

## Fact Sheet



### THE STATES & HYDRAULIC FRACTURING REGULATIONS

Hydraulic fracturing is generally considered to be part of well completion operations—i.e., work performed on a well after it has been drilled, to evaluate the well and prepare it for production. States regulate all aspects of well drilling, production, plugging, and waste management. States regulate hydraulic fracturing directly as one of the aspects of well completion. The regulations provide for the protection of public health and safety, natural resources, and the environment—including soils, groundwater, surface water, and air.

### OIL AND GAS REGULATIONS COVER THE FOLLOWING OIL & GAS ACTIVITIES AMONG OTHERS:

#### REGULATED ACTIVITY

#### HOW REGULATIONS RELATE TO HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

Well Locating

Specify density and siting criteria for wells, to limit potential for impacts to other land uses and protect property and the environment.

Drilling, Casing, Cementing

Assure stability and integrity of the wellbore; prevent oil, gas, and fracturing fluids from migrating into fresh water zones or other unintended strata.

Well Completion

Assure hydraulic fracturing fluids are properly contained and managed. Regulate disposal of spent fracturing fluids. May regulate source of water used for fracturing fluid.

Plugging and Restoration

Assure that nonproductive or depleted wells are not conduits for movement of oil, gas, or fracturing fluids

### STATE OIL & GAS AGENCIES CARRY OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES THROUGH THE FOLLOWING REGULATORY ACTIONS:

#### REGULATORY ACTION

#### APPLICATIONS TO HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

Promulgation of Rules and Regulations

Establish the framework to protect groundwater and other resources.

Permitting

Review individual well plans to ensure they meet the intent of the rules and regulations.

Oversight of Drilling and Completion Operations

Assure that drilling, casing, and cementing adhere to permit conditions and rules. Assure proper handling of fluids on the surface and cleanup of any spills.

Oversight of Production Operations

Assure proper management of fracture flow back fluids during initial stage of production.

Oversight of Plugging and Restoration

Assure that oil and gas zones, including fractured intervals, are properly sealed.

*Monitoring by state agencies includes on-site inspections, review of reports and records submitted by the operator, and investigation of complaints. States agencies typically provide opportunities for direct public input—either formal or informal, or both—in rule promulgation and permitting. Concerned citizens may also register complaints or questions with the agencies in every other phase of the regulatory process.*

