



Gas facilities are now required to hold an environment protection licence

A key measure of the NSW Gas Plan (Plan) is to bolster enforcement and compliance of the NSW gas industry.

To achieve this measure gas exploration, assessment and production titles and activities, once approved in the planning process, are now required to hold an environment protection licence issued by the EPA. This includes conventional gas, coal seam gas and tight gas.

Environment protection licences give the EPA direct regulatory oversight of gas operations and ensure effective, consistent and transparent regulation of the gas industry.

To require current gas activities to hold an environment protection licence the [Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment \(NSW Gas Plan\) Regulation 2014](#) was made on 19 December 2014.

This new regulation aligns the environmental regulation of all petroleum activities with the amendments that were made in 2013 to better regulate coal seam gas activities.

To inform all gas activities of their responsibility to hold an environment protection licence, the EPA has written to all 40 existing petroleum title holders in the state inviting them to apply for an environment protection licence or licence variation by 19 March 2015.

An environment protection licence contains legally enforceable site specific conditions, which holders must comply with in order to prevent and minimise pollution, and safeguard the environment.

The EPA will assess each environment protection licence application and the site specific risks posed by each premises to develop the licence conditions. This process will be undertaken in line with the EPA's risk-based licensing system.

Coal seam gas facilities that already hold an environment protection licence must apply to the EPA for a licence variation; this is primarily an update of administrative details of the licence to reflect the legislative amendment.

Once the EPA receives an application the EPA has 60 days to respond.

Environment protection licences do not provide the approval for gas operators to conduct an activity; rather they set site specific conditions and controls for approved activities to protect the environment which the licence holder must operate within.

Applications for petroleum exploration are overseen by the [Division of Resources and Energy](#). Applications for petroleum production are overseen by [NSW Planning and Environment](#).

All Environment Protection Licences are available on the [EPA's public register](#).