



Compressor Start Gas Discharge Venting Reviewed

TO: Industry Clients

EFFECTIVE DATE: Dec. 1, 2011

BACKGROUND:

The BC Oil and Gas Commission (Commission) has reviewed the common practice of venting compressor start gas discharge directly to the atmosphere in light of the provincial targets to reduce greenhouse gases.

The current regulatory requirement in Section 41(1) of the Drilling and Production Regulation (DPR) allows venting only if:

1. The heating value, volume or flow rate is insufficient to support stable combustion.
2. The venting is conducted in a manner that does not constitute a safety hazard.
3. The venting does not cause off-site odours.
4. The quantity of vented gas is minimized.
5. The duration of venting is minimized.

The intent of this section is to minimize all venting of natural gas by conserving, where reasonable, or ignition of the gas if it will support stable combustion and a flare system exists. In some cases venting may be an acceptable option.

REQUIREMENT:

For new facility installations where natural gas is being utilized as the motive force to start compressors, the starter discharge vents must be connected to a flare system or the gas conserved through an expansion vessel and a vapour recovery system if one is proposed at the facility unless there is an acceptable rationale provided in the application for venting in accordance with section 41(1) of the DPR.

For existing compressor facility installations where natural gas is being utilized as the motive force to start compressors and the gas is being vented directly to atmosphere, the Commission requires the permit holder to conduct and submit a documented review of the current venting practice in relation to the requirements set out in section 41(1) of the DPR.

There will be a 12-month time frame, starting from the effective date of this industry bulletin, for the required reviews and changes to the facility identified by the review to be completed. After the expiry of the 12-month time frame, if reviews have not been submitted or if the changes to the facility have not been completed, the Commission may initiate compliance actions.

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