



Key Things to Know About EPA’s Final Rule to Reduce Methane and Other Pollution from Oil and Natural Gas Operations

Fact Sheet

DECEMBER 2, 2023 – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced a [final rule](#) that will sharply reduce emissions of methane and other harmful air pollution from oil and natural gas operations. The rule includes standards to reduce methane and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from new, modified, and reconstructed sources. It also includes Emissions Guidelines for states to follow as they develop plans to limit methane emissions from existing sources. Oil and natural gas operations are the largest industrial source of methane pollution in the U.S. Methane is a climate “super pollutant,” and rapid, sharp cuts in methane emissions are a crucial addition to cutting carbon dioxide in slowing the rate of warming of Earth’s atmosphere.

Here are some key things to know about the final rule:

- 1. It will yield significant climate and health benefits for all Americans by achieving historic reductions in methane pollution, as well as smog-forming VOCs and toxic air pollutants like benzene and toluene.** The rule will avoid an estimated 58 million tons of methane emissions from 2024 to 2038. That’s nearly 80 percent less than projected methane emissions without the rule. The rule will also avoid 16 million tons of smog-forming VOC emissions and 590,000 tons of air toxics.
- 2. EPA considered nearly 1 million comments on two proposals as it developed the final rule.**
- 3. The rule recognizes and encourages innovation in methane detection technology.** The final rule expands options for using advanced methane detection technologies, like satellite monitoring, aerial surveys, and continuous monitors, to find leaks. And it encourages continued innovation by creating a streamlined pathway for owners and operators to use new technologies as they develop.
- 4. The rule gives industry time to prepare to meet requirements and to secure necessary equipment.** EPA updated several aspects of the rule to provide industry the lead time needed to comply. Those include a two-year phase-in period for eliminating routine flaring of natural gas from new oil wells, and a one-year phase-in of zero-emissions standards for new process controllers and pumps outside of Alaska.
- 5. The rule includes a program to leverage third-party expertise to find large emissions known as “super emitters.”** The design of the final program reflects feedback from industry and gives EPA a central role to ensure that it operates with a high degree of integrity, transparency, and accountability.
- 6. The rule gives states, along with Tribes that wish to regulate existing sources, two years to develop and submit their plans for reducing methane from existing sources.** The final emission guidelines also give existing sources ample lead time for compliance, providing three years from the deadline for plan submission for existing sources to comply.
- 7. Benefits of the rule far outweigh costs.** EPA estimates the rule will yield net climate and ozone health benefits of \$97 to \$98 billion dollars from 2024-2038 (\$2019), the equivalent of \$7.3 to \$7.6 billion a year, after accounting for the costs of compliance and savings from recovered natural gas.
- 8. By preventing methane emissions, the rule will recover enough natural gas to heat nearly 8 million homes for the winter.**

To read the final rule and additional fact sheets, visit <https://www.epa.gov/controlling-air-pollution-oil-and-natural-gas-industry/actions-and-notices-about-oil-and-natural#reactions>