



Oil & Gas Authority

21 Bloomsbury
London WC1B 3HF

John Wilkinson

By email to: request-404664-4d10495b@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: FOI-2017-0028

2 June 2017

Dear Mr Wilkinson,

Thank you for your email of 3 May 2017, in which you request:

"Dear Oil and Gas Authority,

Why does the information required by the OGA in an operator's Hydraulic Fracture Plan (as part of Extended Well Tests) specify a range of detail needed in relation to induced seismicity, but fails to cover the prospect of the migration to the surface of fugitive toxic gases and fluids which are released but not captured during the fracking process?

Does the OGA intend to amend its guidance to operators to seek information regarding this prospect of migration through conduits and pathways presented by:

- (a) vertical and inter-connecting fault lines in the rock strata,*
- (b) capped fracking wells, when over time steel casings will corrode and concrete linings shrink and crack,*
and
- (c) around the head of disused conventional oil and gas wells located near to a fracking well?*

Yours faithfully,

John Wilkinson."

The Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) has considered your requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (**FOIA**) and, where relevant, under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (**EIRs**).

In relation to your first request it is important to clarify a misunderstanding in respect of your statement regarding what the OGA require in a Hydraulic Fracture Plan.

The OGA's responsibility is in the monitoring, regulation, evaluation and mitigation of risks of induced seismicity during hydraulic fracturing.

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Matters such as the protection of groundwater or the environment (as implied in your request) are the responsibility of the Environment Agency (EA), and therefore any questions about the role of the Hydraulic Fracture Plan in managing any alleged risks should be directed to them.

The OGA is unable to answer your second request as these issues are outside of the remit for the OGA.

Your bullet point (a) (relating to emissions) would be a matter for the Environment Agency and your points at bullet points (b) and (c) (relating to well integrity) would be a matter for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Therefore, for the purposes of the FOIA and EIRs, the OGA does not hold this information.

For reference, the OGA's guidance for an Extended Well Test and Hydraulic Fracture Plans can be found via this

link: https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/media/3168/onshore-ewt-and-hfp_january-2017.pdf

The EA and HSE can be contacted at the addresses below:

FOI requests

Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests

PO Box 544

Rotherham

S60 1BY

Email

enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

HSE head office

Health and Safety Executive

Redgrave Court

Merton Road

Bootle

Merseyside

L20 7HS

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/your-right-to-know.htm>

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Appeals procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the way the OGA has handled your request, you may request an internal review. A request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of receipt of the response to your request and should be addressed to:

Strategy Directorate
Oil and Gas Authority
21 Bloomsbury Street
London
WC1B 3HF
Email: foirequests@ogauthority.co.uk

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications with regard to this request.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the internal review, you may complain to the Information Commissioner at www.ico.org.uk or at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Strategy Directorate