



## ***School District 59 (Peace River South)***

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### **Safety Guidelines and Practices**

#### **Where Oil and Gas Activity is in the Vicinity of a School District 59 School**

##### **Preamble:**

The Peace River Regional District is the primary authority, and bears primary responsibility for maintaining safe environmental conditions for those residing in rural areas. In cooperation with the PRRD, and the Oil and Gas Industry, School District No. 59 (Peace River South), has developed plans and practices to protect the safety and well being of students and employees.

School District No. 59 is dedicated to safeguarding our students and employees from harm. When oil and gas drilling, well maintenance and exploration activities are taking place in proximity to schools, a response is necessary in the event of an uncontrolled gas leak. A written emergency plan, which describes the action to be taken will be available to all staff while drilling, fracturing, or maintenance operations are occurring (attached Appendix I and II). District personnel will provide readiness training and assistance to staff in affected schools, so they will understand the actions to be taken during an emergent event.

Site principals and District managers will rely heavily on the advice of oil and gas personnel and the monitoring equipment available in their operations. Decisions against evacuating a school during a gas release, versus a decision to evacuate, will be done in consultation with those working with the event. Releases of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) or hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S), may be at levels that must be permitted to dissipate before anyone is exposed to the gas in full concentration. In this case, the safest place may be inside the school. On the other hand, should gas be releasing over time, causing a prolonged threat of exposure, evacuating the school may present the best option. The decision to evacuate a school will be made in consultation with or by recommendation from those working with the gas release.

##### **Industry Responsibilities:**

The company operating the drilling rig or performing operations within the emergency response area will provide the School District and School with the following:

- The date that drilling activities are planned to commence;
- A contact person and telephone number to respond to school concerns and to communicate emergent events;
- A copy of their approved Emergency Response Plan\* as filed with the Oil and Gas Commission;
- Expected levels of H<sub>2</sub>S gas in the zones they will be penetrating, including a detailed explanation of the unit of measurement they are using to define H<sub>2</sub>S risk to residences in the Emergency Response Plan;
- Compensation for expenses associated with providing emergency planning response services at a location. This includes, but is not limited to: stand-by school buses,

additional transportation costs, air monitoring equipment, alarm systems, communications equipment, informational evenings with parents/residents, photocopying and distribution of emergency plans to parents, additional supervision and care of students in the event of evacuation;

- Restorative measures with the school and the parents should an evacuation occur.  
*\*note: The Emergency Response Plan is generally considered to apply to residents who are within 1 kilometre of well operations. This is considered the Emergency Planning Zone. Schools within that zone will receive additional consultation.*

#### Initial Procedures/Practices:

If a principal is approached from a representative of the oil and gas industry, they will take detailed notes and ask the agent to provide the same information to the SD#59 Facilities Manager and the Assistant Superintendent. The school principal will notify the Facilities Manager and Assistant Superintendent of the proposed drilling activities and timelines, as soon as possible following a contact of that nature.

If the proposed activities will involve the potential release of H<sub>2</sub>S gas, the following will occur:

- A review of the Fire and Emergency Response Plans that are in place for the school;
- District staff will show principals, custodian and other staff the emergency shut-down procedures for the furnace intake and ventilation systems;
- A staff person at the school (and an alternate) will be identified and their contact number will be provided to the drilling company. This will be the emergency contact person between the drilling platform/operations, and the school, should an event arise;
- The District Transportation Manager will be notified of the planned activities;
- The Transportation Manager will require 24 hours notice prior to the need for stand-by bussing;
- The Assistant Superintendent will be informed and updated of any disturbances to school routines that have occurred as the result of drilling or maintenance activities.

#### Evacuation Procedures/practices:

In the event that a drilling company recommends the evacuation of a school in their emergency response zone, the following will occur;

- When a rural principal receives the recommendation to evacuate the school s/he will immediately contact the Transportation Manager and inform him that the rural school's emergency evacuation plan has been activated (The Assistant Superintendent/Superintendent and Facilities Manager will also be immediately informed);
- The Transportation Manager will dispatch sufficient buses to evacuate all students and staff that are positioned at that school;
- Drivers will be informed of the gas leak, and will be informed of routes to avoid;
- In the event that a rural school in the Dawson Creek area is evacuated, all students will be transported to South Peace Secondary School;
- The principal of SPSS will be notified by the rural school principal that the rural school's emergency evacuation plan has been activated and approximately how many students and staff will be arriving;
- A list of students and their home phone numbers will accompany the evacuated students and staff, so all affected parents may be contacted;

- An evacuation plan will be developed/reviewed by the Transportation Department each year to maintain awareness of the procedures;

#### Remote Monitoring Equipment:

Remote monitoring equipment, a stand-by bus and transportation personnel may be provided to a school when a company's drilling platform is close to a school, and drilling is through areas that have dangerous H<sub>2</sub>S concentrations. If this equipment is on the school grounds:

- The company will inform the school of the guidelines for when to engage the school evacuation plan;
- School personnel will be trained to read and understand the information from the remote monitoring equipment;
- A communication protocol will be in place between the drilling platform and the school.

#### The School and Parent Relationship:

The school will assume no responsibility with regard to being the expert on risks associated with oil and gas activities, and will not take on the role of being the main contact with the drilling company, or be responsible for the distribution of information on behalf of the drilling company. The school will cooperate with the drilling company to distribute safety information to students and parents. The school evacuation plan will also be communicated to parents/guardians. The safety of the students and staff while attending school is the primary concern of the District. The principal and District staff will not become involved in community health and safety concerns that are the responsibility of the drilling company. Parent concerns regarding the activities of a drilling company near their residence will need to be addressed to the drilling company directly rather than the school.

#### Notification of Risk to Students, Staff, Parents:

It is the responsibility of the drilling company to provide information to everyone within the emergency response area. The information will include planned drilling activities, and the risks associated with those activities. The school will provide the following support for parents:

- Parents will be informed of the drilling operations schedule in advance, by way of school newsletter, or a notice to parents through other media;
- Shortly after the drilling operation has commenced, a reminder notice will be sent home with the students. This reminder will detail the emergency procedures that will remain in place, including the emergency evacuation plan;
- If parents are concerned regarding drilling operations, the school will provide a venue for the drilling company to host a meeting that will address concerns.

#### Superintendent Notification:

The Superintendent of Schools will be advised immediately if a school activates the Emergency Evacuation Plan. Media enquiries will be directed to the Board Office.

# Appendix I

## Managing a Hazardous Gas Release

### OUTDOOR GAS RELEASE PROTOCOL

\* NOTE: A school will only be evacuated if it is safe for the driver(s) to approach the school, and staff/students are able to move safely from the school to the bus for transport. Another worthy note is that: “There have been no recorded instances of sour gas exposure killing a member of the general public in the 80 years of sour gas development in Western Canada.”<sup>1</sup> The fatalities that have occurred were occupational, and primarily the result of workers climbing into contaminated spaces.

In the event a rural school:

- Receives an audio signal from a remote monitoring device.
- Notes a strong gaseous odour, or a rotten egg odour outside.
- Principal believes that emission of a hazardous substance may have occurred.
- The school receives a phone call or other communication from a drilling company or from the Board Office that there has been a gas release. The drilling company will advise the response to use to protect the students and staff. Essentially, the options will be to stay in place and seal off the school, or to initiate evacuation procedures.

“Stay in Place “ procedure;

1. Ring the outdoor buzzer or bell that will bring everyone into the school if recess or lunch break happen to be occurring. Immediately gather everyone inside and close the doors. Ensure all the students and staff are accounted for class-by-class. Teachers stay with their students in the classroom.
2. Close and lock all windows and outside doors, and if possible tape the crack around exterior doors and window frames.
3. Turn off all appliances and equipment that either blow outside or suck air into the school. Shut off furnaces and ensure outside air dampers are closed. Ventilation fans over stoves or in shop areas will need to be turned off.
4. Leave all interconnecting doors within hallways and classrooms open.
5. Be patient as the gas cloud dissipates and the area becomes safe. Oil and gas personnel will be monitoring the air quality and may order an evacuation as needed.
6. The school will be notified when the gas cloud has dissipated and it is safe to leave the school.

“Evacuation” procedure;

If an evacuation of the school has been advised, all of the above steps will be carried out to ensure safety while the buses are enroute to the school. Then, follow the steps below:

7. Contact the Transportation Manager to inform him that you have initiated your School Evacuation plan.
8. Contact the Board Office and inform the Assistant Superintendent that you have initiated your School Evacuation Plan.
9. Contact the Principal of South Peace Secondary School to inform of the arrival of your school population.

10. Be patient and remain calm as the buses are enroute. It is an event that is out of the ordinary, however routines will soon be back to normal.
11. Keep an open phone line between the Board Office and the school if possible;
12. Notify students and staff that they will be transported to South Peace Secondary School, where staff and students are expecting their arrival. Notify students that their parents will be called and informed that they are being moved to SPSS.
13. Assemble phone numbers and contacts for the students, so parents can be notified once you arrive at SPSS.

1. *Sour Gas: Questions + Answers*, Canadian Centre for Energy Information, ([www.centreforenergy.com](http://www.centreforenergy.com))