

Our mission is to serve Texas by our stewardship of natural resources and the environment, our concern for personal and community safety, and our support of enhanced development and economic vitality for the benefit of Texans.

RRC Adopts Weatherization Rule

The Railroad Commission of Texas commissioners adopted the state's first weatherization rule for natural gas facilities to protect gas flow to power generators and ensure Texans have electricity during weather emergencies.

The new Weather Emergency Preparedness Standards rule (Statewide Rule 3.66) implements provisions in Senate Bill 3, which was passed by the Texas Legislature and signed by Governor Abbott in 2021 following the Winter Storm Uri. The rule was adopted ahead of the legislative deadline mandated by Senate Bill 3. The new rule requires critical gas facilities on the state's Electricity Supply Chain Map to weatherize, based on facility-specific factors, to ensure sustained operation during a weather emergency; correct known issues that caused weather-related forced stoppages occurred before Dec. 1, 2022; and contact the RRC if they sustain a weather-related forced stoppage during a weather emergency.

Types of critical facilities include natural gas wells and oil leases that contain natural gas wells, saltwater disposal wells, gas processing plants, all intrastate underground natural gas facilities, and gas pipelines that directly serve electricity generation on the electricity supply chain map. The RRC's Critical Infrastructure Division inspectors based in regional offices across the state will begin inspections December 1. Inspections will begin by prioritizing wells and other natural gas infrastructure that produce, store, process, or transport large volumes of natural gas. The RRC will further prioritize inspections in descending order in accordance with a facility's production volume or storage, processing, or transportation capacity.

Fines for administrative violations could reach up to \$1 million. The penalty structure in the rule recommends aggressive administrative penalties for those operators who do not properly prepare their facilities for weather emergencies and intentionally disregard the weatherization rule.

Statewide Rule 3.66 requires facilities representing a large portion of daily natural gas supply in Texas to be prepared to operate during weather emergencies. The final rule adopted considered the 139 total public comments on the proposed rule; the Commission responded to the comments in the preamble.

The weatherization rule can be found on the RRC website: <https://www.rrc.texas.gov/media/c5hdc4ga/rule-3-66.pdf>



Photo courtesy Andrea Meyer

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