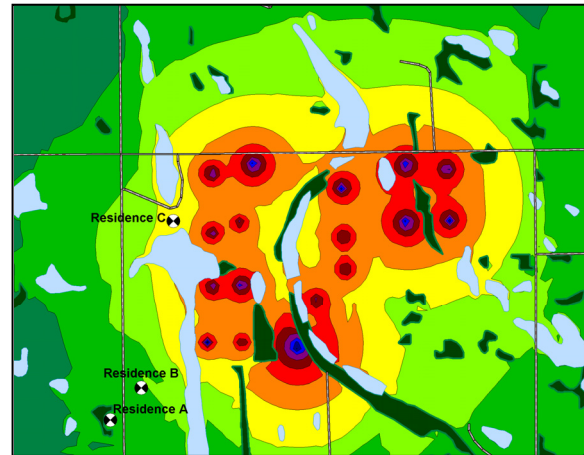


Summary of February 2010 Updates to AUC Rule 012 - Noise Control for Power Generation Facilities

In February 2010 the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) released a new version of Rule 012 – Noise Control. This new document contains a number of changes that effect licensees when preparing Noise Impact Assessments (NIAs) and Comprehensive Sound Level Surveys (CSLS). The following are some of the changes that we think will impact licensees the most:

- When conducting CSLS licensees must provide a completed **Noise Complaint Investigation Form** or documentation of its attempts to directly engage the complainant in the completion of the form if the complainant does not participate in the completion of the form. Complainants are also encouraged to record details about environmental and facility operating conditions under which noise adversely affects them.
- Throughout Rule 012 the term “receptor” has been updated to “dwelling”. This clarifies that the expected **measurement point for Comprehensive Sound Surveys** is 15 m from the nearest or most impacted dwelling, rather than at the property line of the land on which the dwelling is located.
- The definition of deferred facilities has been clarified. **Deferred Facilities** do not have to demonstrate compliance in the absence of a noise complaint until 2018; however, if a noise complaint is filed with the Commission, the facility needs to meet the same compliance levels as new facilities.
- All relevant and supporting information for an NIA is to be included in one NIA document to facilitate the review process. An applicant for a facility must prepare/have prepared a noise impact assessment that includes the potential noise impacts of the proposed facility operating under normal operating conditions and **attach the complete NIA to the application for the proposed facility**. Submitting only a summary form of the results of the NIA is no longer acceptable.



Assessing the Cumulative Noise Environment

Although the requirement for the cumulative noise level of existing energy-related facilities and proposed facilities to meet the permissible sound level has not changed, it has become a more common concern for licensees conducting NIAs. When existing facilities potentially impact the noise environment, they must be quantified in an NIA in order to avoid licensing delays. The most straight forward method to quantify existing facilities is field reconnaissance, whereby fence line noise measurements are gathered for each potentially noisy facility and their measured noise emissions included in the noise model. This method quantifies each existing facility as a single noise source and usually provides sufficient detail to prepare an NIA. It also can identify whether further study may be required. If the reconnaissance finds that the cumulative sound levels may be over the PSL, then more detailed study will be required to assess the most cost effective noise control strategy. Often, minor noise sources are identified in the area such as pump jacks or wellhead compression. In these cases, theoretical assessments could be used to avoid costs associated with field noise measurements. If there are no other significant facilities in the area then delays can be avoided by confirming the absence of other facilities in the NIA.