



Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
Constitution Hall  
525 West Allegan Street  
Lansing MI 48913

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) protects and enhances Michigan's environment and public health. As stewards of Michigan's environmental heritage, the DEQ works on behalf of the people of the Great Lakes state for an improved quality of life and a sustainable future. In service to the public, we administer programs and enforce laws that protect public health and promote the appropriate use of, limit the adverse effects on, and restore the quality of the environment. We encourage voluntary action to enhance our natural resources and the environment. We preserve biologically diverse, rare, sensitive, or endangered plants, animals, and ecosystems through identification, education, management, and public/private partnerships and initiatives. We advance environmental protection through innovation and improvements to regulations and programs.

## Oil, Gas, and Minerals Division

The Oil, Gas, and Minerals Division (OGMD) is responsible for assuring the efficient and orderly development of fossil fuel and mineral resources while protecting the environment, property, and public health and safety. The OGMD oversees the locating, drilling, operating, and plugging of wells used for exploration and production of oil, gas, brine, and other minerals, including wells for underground storage and waste disposal. The OGMD regulates several mining industries in Michigan, including metallic mining, native copper mining, sand dune mining, and coal mining. The OGMD also develops and distributes a variety of on-line datasets, including: maps, publications, production data on fossil fuels, and various data on minerals for industry and public use.

### Oil and Gas Program

The OGMD regulates the locating, spacing, drilling, operating, and plugging of oil and gas wells and the operation of associated storage and disposal facilities. Staff reviews applications and issues permits to drill and operate; conducts inspections; and enforces well construction, spill prevention, and cleanup requirements. The OGMD also regulates production rates for wells to assure the conservation and efficient recovery of oil and gas. There are approximately 15,500 active oil and gas wells, 3,000 gas storage wells, and 1,300 injection wells related to secondary recovery and brine disposal in Michigan. Another 35,000 wells have been drilled and plugged as nonproductive and/or depleted. If the owner of a nonproductive well no longer exists, or simply refuses to plug the well, the OGMD utilizes funds from the conformance bonding requirements and/or through the orphan well program, which uses oil and gas industry fees and taxes to plug wells and restore surface locations.



### Mineral Wells Program

The OGMD regulates the location, drilling, operation, and closure of minerals wells, which includes wells for waste disposal, brine production, solution mining, storage, and mineral exploration. Staff evaluates applications, issues permits, and carries out inspections, and enforces requirements for construction and operation of mineral wells and associated facilities. There are approximately 200 active permitted mineral wells in Michigan, and an average of 10 new mineral wells are permitted and drilled each year.

## Mining and Petroleum Geology

The OGMD regulates several mining industries in Michigan, including sand mining in designated coastal dune areas, metallic mining, native copper mining, and coal mining. Staff review applications and issue permits, evaluate mining and regulation plans, determine financial responsibility requirements, conduct inspections, enforce regulatory requirements, and oversee the final reclamation at the operations. There are nine active sand dune permits in Michigan which mine approximately 1 million tons of dune sand each year. Metallic minerals mining in Michigan currently includes four permitted non-ferrous metallic mines and one iron mine. These mines and permitted locations are all in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. A newly created program for small scale native copper mining was recently established and is also overseen by the OGMD. Presently, there is no active coal mining in Michigan, in fact, no commercial coal mining has taken place in Michigan since 1955.

## Orphan Well Program

An orphan well or facility is one where the owner is unknown or insolvent. An unplugged abandoned well and its associated facilities can be a hazard to the health and safety of people living near it, or it can cause pollution. An old well or storage tank might be a source for oil or salt brine to pollute fresh groundwater, or to discharge at the surface impacting the soil. To remedy this situation, the OGMD worked with the oil and gas industry to establish an Orphan Well Fund within the Michigan Department of Treasury. The fund authorizes the DEQ director, as the supervisor of wells, to expend money from the fund to plug abandoned or improperly closed oil, gas, or brine disposal wells; to conduct remedial response activities; and to perform site restoration.

For Assistance:

Cadillac District Office: 231-775-3960

Gaylord Field Office: 989-731-4920

Kalamazoo District Office: 269-567-3500

Lansing District Office: 517-373-7055

Petroleum & Mining Geology Unit: 517-284-6826

Saginaw Bay District Office: 989-894-6200

Southeast MI District Office: 586-753-3700

Upper Peninsula District Office: 906-346-8300

Minerals Wells Program: 517-284-6841

Permits and Bonding Unit: 517-284-6826

Records: 517-284-6835

Orphan Well Program: 517-284-6832

OGMD staff are located in several district and field offices throughout the state. Field staff carry out the field activities including responding to complaints, conduction compliance inspections, processing permit applications, and providing local customer service contact points.

Physical address:

Oil, Gas, and Minerals Division  
Constitution Hall 2 South 525 West  
Allegan Street Lansing MI 48913

Mailing address:

DEQ Oil, Gas, and Minerals Division PO  
Box 30256  
Lansing MI 48909-7756

Oil, Gas, and Minerals Division Director  
Harold R. Fitch  
517-284-6823

Copies of all the rules and regulations under the purview of the OGMD are available on-line on the Geology in Michigan page

[http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/AdminCode.aspx?AdminCode=Department&Dpt=EQ&Level\\_1=Oil%2c+Gas%2c+%26+Minerals+Division](http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/AdminCode.aspx?AdminCode=Department&Dpt=EQ&Level_1=Oil%2c+Gas%2c+%26+Minerals+Division)