

ZONING ORDINANCE FOR OIL AND GAS  
EXPLORATION

Kiskiminetas Township Ordinance No. 01 of 2026

KISKIMINETAS TOWNSHIP, ARMSTRONG COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA, KNOWN AS THE KISKIMINETAS  
TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE, AMENDING SECTION 414  
OF THE TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE TO REGARDING  
OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION AND MINERAL EXTRACTION.

Kiskiminetas Township hereby amends the Kiskiminetas Township Code of Ordinances, by adding  
the following:

## **Section 1. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this ordinance is to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Kiskiminetas as Township, through zoning and floodplain management provisions, for the reasonable development of land for oil and gas drilling while providing adequate health, safety and general welfare protections of the township's residents. Oil and gas exploration, drilling and extraction operations involve activities that are economically important and will impact the township. Accordingly, it is necessary and appropriate to adopt reasonable requirements for oil and gas resource development so that these resources can be obtained in a manner that is economically remunerative, and that minimizes the potential impact on the residents of the township.

## **Section 2. DEFINITIONS:**

"Building"— An occupied structure with walls and roof with which persons have or customarily work. The term shall not include a barn, shed or other storage building.

"Collector Street"-- A public street or road which, in addition to providing access to abutting lots, intercepts local streets and provides a route for carrying considerable volumes of local traffic to community facilities and arterial streets.

"Department"— The Department of Environmental Protection of the Commonwealth.

"Derrick" — Any portable framework, tower mast and/or structure which is required or used in connection with drilling or re-working a well for the production of oil or gas.

"Drilling well ownerpad"-- The area of surface operations surrounding the surface location of a well or wells. Such area shall not include an access road to the drilling pad.

"Drill Pad"— Defined as the flat stone footprint of the well pad where operations takes place for drilling, completions and production of and oil and gas well. This does not include appurtenances to the well pad including access roads, fill and cut slopes, stormwater ponds, etc.

"Fracking" — The process of injecting water, customized fluids, sand, steam, or gas into a gas well under pressure to improve gas recovery.

"Local Street" -- A public street or road designed to provide access to abutting lots and to discourage through traffic, which is either publicly or privately maintained.

"Oil and Gas" -- Crude oil, natural gas, methane gas, coal bed methane gas, propane, butane and/or any other constituents or similar substances that are produced by drilling an oil or gas well.

"Oil and Gas Development or Development"-- The well site preparation, construction, drilling, re-drilling, hydraulic fracturing, and/or site restoration associated with an oil or gas well of any depth; water and other fluid storage, impoundment and transportation used for such activities; installation and operation of an oil and gas maintenance pad; and the installation and use of all associated equipment, including tanks, compression for gas originating at the oil and gas well site, meters, and other equipment and structures whether permanent or temporary; and the site preparation, construction, installation, maintenance and repair of oil and gas pipelines and associated equipment and other equipment and activities associated with the exploration for, production and transportation of oil and gas. The definition does not include natural gas compressor stations and natural gas processing plants or facilities performing the equivalent functions.

Oil and Gas Development Maintenance Pad – A temporary or permanent site constructed and used for the storage, staging or operation of construction trailers, housing trailers, construction materials, equipment, trucks and other vehicles in support of oil and gas development.

"Oil or Gas Well"--A pierced or bored hole drilled or being drilled in the ground for the purpose of, or to be used for, producing, extracting or injecting gas, oil, petroleum or another liquid related to oil or gas production or storage, including brine disposal.

"Oil or Gas Well Site" -- The location where facilities, structures, materials and equipment whether temporary or permanent, necessary for or incidental to the preparation, construction, drilling, production or operation of an oil or gas well. This definition also includes exploratory wells.

"Operator"-- The person designated as the well operator on the permit application or well registration.

"Natural Gas Compressor Station" --- A facility designed and constructed to compress natural gas that originates from a collection of gas wells operating as a midstream facility for delivery of gas to a transmission pipeline, distribution pipeline, natural gas processing plant or underground storage field, including one or more natural gas compressors, associated buildings, pipes, valves, tanks, flare tower, communications tower, and other equipment. When used in this ordinance, the term shall include any similar facilities performing the equivalent or similar functions. The term shall not include the compression of natural gas located on the same well pad from which the natural gas originates. "Natural Gas Processing Plant" -- A facility designed and constructed to remove materials such as ethane, propane, butane, and other constituents or similar substances from natural gas to allow such natural gas to be of such quality as is required or appropriate for transmission or distribution to commercial markets but not including facilities or equipment that are designed and constructed primarily to remove water, water vapor, oil or naturally occurring liquids from the natural gas.

"Storage well"-- A well used for and in connection with the underground

storage of natural gas, including injection into or withdrawal from an underground storage reservoir for monitoring or observation of reservoir pressure.

“Well Applicant” -- Any person, owner, operator, partnership, company, corporation and its subcontractors and agents who has an interest in real estate for the purpose of exploring or drilling for, producing, or transporting oil or gas.

"Well Owner"-- A person, who owns, manages, leases, controls or possesses an oil or gas well.

### **Section 3. ZONING CLASSIFICATIONS**

Subject to the provisions of this ordinance:

- A. An oil or gas development, or a natural gas compressor station, or a natural gas processing plant, or any similar facilities performing equivalent functions shall be considered a permitted use within I-Industrial, A-Agricultural and AR-Agricultural Residential zoning districts.
- B. Oil or gas development shall be considered a conditional use in the R-Residential, B-Business and SR-Suburban Residential zoning districts, or in any parcel that abuts the R-Residential, B-Business, or SR-Suburban Residential Zoning District
- C. A natural gas compressor station or a natural gas processing plant or any similar facilities performing the equivalent functions shall be considered a conditional use in R-residential, B-Business and SR-Suburban Residential zoning districts.

### **Section 4. APPLICABILITY:**

- A. This ordinance applies to all oil and gas development, natural gas compressor stations, and natural gas processing plants for which an application is filed with the Township after the effective date of the ordinance.
- B. Oil and gas well development, natural gas compressor stations, and natural gas processing plants that were permitted or constructed prior to the adoption of this ordinance shall not be required to meet the requirements of this ordinance; provided that any modification to an existing or permitted oil or gas well site that occurs after the effective date of this ordinance and materially alters the size, type, location, number of wells and other accessory equipment or structures, or any physical modifications to an existing natural gas compressor station or natural gas processing plant shall require compliance with and a permit under this ordinance.
- C. Federal or state law or regulation preempts ordinance requirements that

conflict with federal or state statute or regulation. Township acknowledges that it is pre-empted from regulating the operational methods of the oil and gas industry and may only regulate land uses.

**Section 5. PERMIT/CONDITIONAL USE REQUIRED:**

- A. No oil or gas development, natural gas compressor station, or natural gas processing plant or an addition to an existing oil or gas development, natural gas compressor station, or natural gas processing plant shall be constructed or located within Kiskiminetas Township unless a permit or conditional use, as required by this ordinance, has been issued by the Township. The permit or conditional use application, or amended permit or conditional use application, shall be accompanied by a fee as established in the Township's schedule of fees.
- B. Any modification to an existing and permitted oil or gas well site that materially alters the well pad size, location or number of wells, or any material modification to an existing natural gas compressor station or natural gas processing increasing the facility footprint or number of compressors shall require a modification of the approved permit or conditional use under this ordinance. Like-kind replacements shall not require a permit modification.
- C. **Pre-Application Conference:** Prior to submitting an application, the applicant is strongly encouraged to meet with the township staff to determine the requirements of and the procedural steps and timing of the application. The intent of this process is for the applicant to obtain necessary information and guidance from the township staff before entering into any commitments or incurring substantial expenses with regard to the site and plan preparation.

**Section 6. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

- A. The applicant shall provide to the township at the time of permit or conditional use application, where required and applicable to the specific use the following:
  - 1. A narrative describing an overview of the project including the number of acres to be involved, the number of wells to be drilled, and the location, and number and description of equipment and structures to the extent known.
  - 2. A narrative describing an overview of the project as it relates to natural gas compressor stations or natural gas processing plants.
  - 3. The address of the oil and gas development, natural gas compressor station or natural gas processing plant as

determined by the Township or county for information of emergency responders.

4. The contact information of the individual or individuals responsible for the operation and activities at the oil or gas development site shall be provided to the Township and all emergency responders. Such information shall include a phone number where such individual or individuals can be contacted twenty-four hours per day, three-hundred sixty-five days a year. Annually, or upon any change of relevant circumstances, the well applicant shall update such information and provide it to the Township and all emergency responders.
5. Upon the request of the Township, a location map of the oil or gas well site showing the approximate location of derricks, drilling rigs, equipment and structures and all permanent improvements to the site and any post construction surface disturbance in relation to natural and other surroundings. Included in this map shall be an area within the development site for the location and parking of vehicles and equipment used in the transportation of personnel and/or development and use of the site. Such location shall be configured to allow the normal flow of traffic on public streets shall be undisturbed.
6. Upon the request of the Township, a location map of the natural gas compressor station or natural gas processing plant including any equipment and structures and all permanent improvements to the site.
7. A narrative and map describing the manner and routes for the transportation and delivery of equipment, machinery, water, chemicals and other materials used in the siting, drilling, construction, maintenance and operation of the oil or gas well site.
8. A certification or evidence satisfactory to the township that, prior to the commencement of any activity at the oil or gas well site, the well applicant shall have accepted and complied with any applicable bonding and permitting requirements; and shall have entered into a township roadway maintenance and repair agreement with the township, in a form acceptable to the township solicitor, regarding the maintenance and repair of the township streets that are to be used by vehicles for site construction, drilling activities and site operations.
9. A description of, and commitment to maintain, safeguards that shall be taken by the applicant to ensure that Township

streets utilized by the well applicant shall remain free of dirt, mud and debris resulting from site development activities; and the well applicant's assurance that such street will be promptly swept or cleaned if dirt, mud and debris occur as a result of well applicant's usage.

10. Verification that a copy of the operation's Preparedness, Prevention and Contingency Plan has been provided to the Township and all emergency responders.
  11. A statement that the well applicant, upon changes occurring to the operation's Preparedness, Prevention and Contingency Plan, will provide to the Township and all Township Emergency Responders the dated revised copy of the Preparedness, Prevention and Contingency Plan while drilling activities are taking place at the oil or gas well site.
  12. Assurance that, at least 30 days prior to drilling, the well applicant shall provide an appropriate site orientation and training course of the Preparedness, Prevention and Contingency Plan for all Emergency Responders. The coordination, cost and expense of the orientation and training shall be sole responsibility of the well applicant. The well applicant shall not be required to hold more than one site orientation and training course annually under this section.
  13. Upon the request of the Township, a copy of the documents submitted to the Department, or if no document has been submitted to the Department, a narrative describing the environmental impacts of the proposed project on the site and surrounding land and measures proposed to protect or mitigate such impacts.
  14. Upon the request of the Township, a copy of all permits and plans from appropriate regulatory agencies or authorities issued in accordance to environmental requirements.
  15. Upon the request of the Township, a copy of all permits and plans from the appropriate regulatory agencies or authorities issued in accordance with applicable laws and regulations for the proposed use.
- B. Within 15 business days after receipt of a permit application and the required fee, the Township will determine whether the application is complete and adequate and advise the well applicant accordingly.
- C. If the application is complete and fulfills the requirements of this ordinance, the Township shall issue or deny a permit within 30 days following the date

the complete application was submitted.

- D. If the application is incomplete and/or inadequate the municipality will notify the well applicant of the missing or inadequate material and, upon receiving said material, issue or deny the permit within 30 days following receipt.

## **Section 7. PERMITTED USE AND CONDITIONAL USE DESIGN AND INSTALLATION**

### **A. Access.**

- 1. Whenever possible, access to the oil or gas well site should be from a collector street.
- 2. Accepted professional standards pertaining to minimum traffic sight distances for all access points shall be adhered to.

### **B. Structure Height.**

- 1. Permanent structures associated with an oil and gas site, both principal and accessory, shall not exceed forty five (45') feet in height unless side yard building setbacks are increased by one 1' horizontal foot for every one (1') vertical foot above forty five (45') feet but not to exceed two hundred 200' feet maximum.
- 2. Permanent structures associated with natural gas compressor stations or natural gas processing plants shall not exceed forty five (45') feet in height unless side yard building setbacks are increased by one 1' horizontal foot for every one (1') vertical foot above forty five (45') feet but not to exceed two hundred 200' feet maximum.
- 3. There shall be an exemption to the height restrictions contained in this section for the temporary placement of drilling rigs, drying tanks, and other accessory uses necessary for the actual drilling or re-drilling of an oil or gas well.
  - a. The duration of such exemption shall not exceed the actual time period of drilling or re-drilling of an oil or gas well.
  - b. The operator shall give the Township prior written notice of the beginning date for its exercise of the exemption.

### **C. Setbacks.**

- 1. Drilling rigs shall be located a minimum setback distance of 1.5 times their height from any property line, public or private

street, or building not related to the drilling operations on either the same lot or an adjacent lot.

2. The drilling pad for the oil or gas well site shall comply with all setback and buffer requirements of the zoning district in which the oil or gas well site is located, but be at least 100 feet.
3. Natural gas compressor stations or natural gas processing plants shall comply with all setback and buffer requirements of the zoning district in which the natural gas compressor station or natural gas processing plant is located.
4. "Property line" is defined for the purposes of this ordinance to be a dividing line between a parcel that is owned or leased by the operator for the purposes of natural gas operations, and an adjoining property . Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to prevent an oil and gas development to be situated on multiple parcels where the operator has legal right to surface development of mineral rights.
5. Exemption from the standards established in this subsection may be granted by the Township upon a showing by the operator that it is not feasible to meet the setback requirements from surface tract property lines and that adequate safeguards have or will be provided to justify the exemption.
6. Drilling pads, natural gas compressor stations or natural gas processing plants shall be set back 200 feet from buildings or sites registered or eligible for registration on the National Register of Historic Places or the Pennsylvania Register of Historic Places.

D. Screening and Screening.

1. Security fencing shall not be required at oil or gas well sites during the initial drilling, or re-drilling operations, as long as manned 24-hour on-site supervision and security are provided.
2. Upon completion of drilling, and prior to extraction or re-drilling, security fencing consisting of a permanent chain link fence shall be promptly installed at the oil or gas well site to secure well heads, storage tanks, separation facilities, and other mechanical and production equipment and structures on the oil or gas well site.
3. Lockable security gate(s) shall be installed at all vehicular ingress and egress locations to the oil and gas development,

compressor facility, and processing plant sites.

4. Emergency Responders shall be given means to access oil or gas well site in case of an emergency.
5. Warning signs shall be posted surrounding the oil or gas well site providing notice of the potential dangers and the contact information in case of an emergency.
6. In construction of oil or gas well sites the natural surroundings should be considered and attempts made to preserve existing trees and other native vegetation.

E. Lighting.

1. Lighting at the oil or gas well site, or other facilities associated with oil and gas drilling development, either temporary or permanent, shall be directed downward and inward toward the activity, to the extent practicable, so as to minimize the glare on public roads and nearby buildings within 100 feet of the oil or gas well development.
2. Lighting at a natural gas compressor station or a natural gas processing plant shall, when practicable, be limited to security lighting.

F. Noise.

1. The well applicant shall take the following steps to minimize, to the extent possible, noise resulting from the oil or gas well development.
2. Prior to drilling of an oil or gas well or the operation of a natural gas compressor station or a natural gas processing plant, the well applicant shall establish by generally accepted

testing procedures, the continuous seventy-two hour ambient noise level at the nearest residence or public building, school, medical, emergency or other public facility outside of the owned or leased “property line”. In lieu of the establishment of the ambient noise level established by the continuous seventy-two hour test the well applicant may assume and use, for the purpose of compliance with this ordinance, a default ambient noise level of 60 DBA. The sound level meter used in conducting any evaluation shall meet the American National Standard Institute's standard for sound meters or an instrument and the associated recording and analyzing equipment, which will provide equivalent data.

3. The well applicant shall provide the township documentation of the established ambient noise level prior to starting oil or gas drilling and/or production operations.
4. The noise generated during the oil and gas operations or the natural gas compressor station or the natural gas processing plant shall not exceed the average ambient noise level established in subsection (2) by more than:
  - a. 5 decibels during drilling activities;
  - b. 10 decibels during hydraulic fracturing operations;
  - c. 5 decibels for a gas compressor station or a natural gas processing plant; and,
5. Effective sound mitigation devices shall be installed to permanent facilities to address sound levels that would otherwise exceed the noise level standards when located near a residence, public building, school, medical, emergency or other public facilities.

6. Exemption from the standards established in this subsection may be granted by the Township during the drilling stage or at the oil or gas well site, or the gas compressor station, or at the natural gas processing plant for good cause shown and upon written agreement between the well applicant and the township.
7. Complaints received by the township shall be addressed by the well applicant, within 24 hours following receipt of notification by continuously monitoring for a period of forty-eight hours at the nearest property line to the complainant's residential or public building or one-hundred feet from the complainant's residential or public building, school medical, emergency or other public facilities, whichever is closer. The well applicant shall report the findings to the township and shall mitigate the problem to the allowable level if the noise level exceed the allowable rate.
8. Natural gas compressor stations and natural gas processing plants or facilities performing the equivalent functions shall be constructed so as to mitigate sound levels, or have installed mitigation devices to mitigate sound levels that would otherwise exceed the ambient noise level standards at residential or public buildings, medical, emergency or other public facilities.

G. Prohibitions.

1. No drilling shall be allowed in the floodway designated as such in the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and shown on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps.
2. Oil and gas drilling in the 100 year Floodplain is discouraged enforcement
3. Upon request by the township:
  - a. An adequate Emergency Evacuation Plan shall have been produced by the well applicant and filed with the township.

- d. Only necessary and needed structures will be permissible within the floodplain.
- e. All structures within the flood zone shall be designed to withstand a 100-year storm event and certified as such by an engineer or architect, with such certification in writing to be provided to the Township with application.
- f. An Engineer registered in Pennsylvania and qualified to present such documentation that structures will not cause additional flooding on adjacent, upstream and/or downstream properties shall provide such documentation to the Township.

**Section 8. SEVERABILITY:**

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase or portion of this document is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion thereof.

**Section 9. ENFORCEMENT & PENALTIES:**

A. The Township may request a meeting with the permit applicant and or owner operator within 24hr from identifying a violation in relation to a Township issued permit in an attempt to remedy the violation prior to enforcing a civil proceeding before a Magisterial District Judge.

B. Any owner, operator, or other person who violates or permits a violation of this chapter upon being found liable therefore in a civil enforcement proceeding

before a Magisterial District Judge, shall pay to the township a fine of \$500, plus all **court costs**, including, but not limited to, reasonable attorney's fees incurred by the Township on account of such violation. No penalty or cost shall be imposed until the date the determination of the violation by the Magisterial District Judge becomes final. If the defendant neither pays nor timely appeals the judgment, the Township may enforce the judgment as provided by law. Each day a violation exists after final judgment shall constitute a separate offense. The amount of the fine imposed shall be multiplied by the number of such days and may be charged and collected as a judgment by the Township without further judicial proceedings. Further, the appropriate officers or agents of the Township are hereby authorized, to issue a cease and desist notice and/or to seek equitable relief, including injunction, to enforce compliance herewith. No Bond shall be required of the Township if the Township seeks injunctive relief

**Section 10. EFFECTIVE DATE:**

This ordinance shall take effect the \_\_th day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

**KISKIMINETAS TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**