

# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

## **Environmental Protection Performance Standards at Oil and Gas Well Sites**

Discharge requirements  
(§ 78a.60)

*The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is to highlight changes in and address questions about the new regulations. This FAQ should not be used in lieu of reference to the 2012 Oil and Gas Act, 25 Pa.Code Chapter 78a and other applicable laws and regulations. The answers outlined in this FAQ are intended to supplement existing requirements. Nothing in this document shall affect statutory or regulatory requirements.*

*This document is not an adjudication or a regulation. There is no intent on the part of the Department to give this document that weight or deference. The Department may supplement or amend this document at any time as necessary without notice.*

- 1) How do you meet the sheen requirement? Is it just visual?

Yes, the presence of sheen is a visual observation. When sheen is noticed, a sample may need to be taken to confirm the nature of the sheen before the water is allowed to be discharged. (posted 10/20/16)

- 2) What is the depth limit determined to be tophole water?

The depth limit for tophole water is a site-specific analysis and will vary from well to well. "Tophole water" is defined in section 78a.1: Water that is brought to the surface while drilling through the strata containing fresh groundwater and water that is fresh groundwater or water that is from a body of surface water. Tophole water may contain drill cuttings typical of the formation being penetrated but may not be polluted or contaminated by additives, brine, oil or man induced conditions. (posted 10/20/16)