



Petroleum discoveries

Section 284 of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (the Act) requires titleholders to notify NOPTA that petroleum has been discovered.

Division 1 of Part 2 of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Resource Management and Administration) Regulations 2011* (the RMA Regulations) sets out the minimum information to accompany the notification of a petroleum discovery. It also details the minimum information to be included in a discovery assessment report.

What is a petroleum discovery?

Where the presence of petroleum within a reservoir (an accumulation) is indicated during drilling, and the petroleum is likely to be or shown to be producible, the petroleum accumulation is considered to be a discovery.

The classification of a discovery is independent of the size of the resource or whether it is deemed necessary to make an announcement to the stock market.

If you are unsure, please contact the Geoscience & Engineering Team in NOPTA or send an email to resources@nopta.gov.au.

Which titleholders are required to notify NOPTA when petroleum is discovered?

The registered holders of any of the following titles are required to notify NOPTA when petroleum is discovered:

- exploration permit
- retention lease
- production licence.

When must I notify NOPTA regarding the petroleum discovery?

A notification is required if the petroleum discovered in a well is part of a new discrete accumulation.

A notification is also required if a well encountered the petroleum of a known pool **outside** of its known limits or if it encountered a previously unknown phase of producible petroleum (eg an oil rim or gas cap) in a known pool.

Apart from the above circumstances, notification is **not** required if a well encountered petroleum from a petroleum pool that has been identified and recognised in the past by the Joint Authority.

Notification must be given **within 30 days** after the completion of the well. There is no ability to extend this deadline.

The completion of the well is taken to occur on the date the rig is next moved off the location of the well after the discovery has occurred irrespective of whether the well is suspended and a rig will return to the location later.

If NOPTA does not receive a notification and learns that a notification should have been made, NOPTA may request the registered holders to do so.

What information must accompany the notification of a petroleum discovery?

A notification must include, at a minimum, the following information:

- title details
- name of well
- block(s) number(s)
- if determined, rate or quantity of petroleum and water production
- physical and chemical properties of petroleum
- if determined, the physical properties of the petroleum pool
- preliminary estimates of each component of petroleum in place.

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What must I provide after the notification?

A discovery assessment report must be submitted **within 90 days** after the completion of the well.

However, if NOPTA considers that additional information is to be included in the report, a request will be sent within seven days of receiving the notification of the discovery detailing the information sought and the reasons for the request. If you believe you will be unable to provide the additional information, you may submit a written statement as to why the information cannot be provided. NOPTA will consider the statement and advise whether the additional information may be omitted or not.

A discovery assessment report must contain, at a minimum, the following information:

- title details
- preliminary estimate of location and areal extent of petroleum pool (such as structural maps and interpretative seismic sections)
- details of geological structure where the petroleum pool is located
- results of all assessments of the discovery (such as petrophysical interpretation logs, test results and pressure data)
- preliminary estimate of quantity of petroleum in the pool (P10, P50 and P90)
- data used to estimate the quantity of petroleum
- preliminary estimate of recoverable petroleum
- details of plans for further evaluation
- details of planned work for the next 12 months in the title area.

In certain circumstances, an extension may be given. If you find that you will be unable to submit your report on time, prior to the due date you should submit a request to resources@nopta.gov.au.

How and where do I notify NOPTA of a petroleum discovery and submit a discovery assessment report?

Notifications and reports can be submitted to resources@nopta.gov.au or in hard copy to NOPTA's Perth office.

More information

If you have any questions regarding your petroleum discovery, please contact resources@nopta.gov.au.

Other information, while not explicitly required to be included in an annual title assessment report, may be included to assist explaining the geological understanding of the title area (e.g. reprocessing data reports).

***Please note:** this document is intended as a guide only and should not be relied on as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice in individual cases.*

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