



Crude Oil Treatment Techniques

2 – 6 November 2026
Madrid (Spain)



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Introduction

Crude oil treatment is a critical stage in upstream and midstream operations, ensuring that produced fluids meet processing, transportation, and refining specifications. This Crude Oil Treatment Techniques course provides a theoretical framework covering the principles, technologies, and operational considerations of crude oil treatment. It explores how impurities, such as water, salts, gases, and solids, affect equipment integrity and product quality. The course scope includes physical, chemical, and thermal treatment methods used across onshore and offshore facilities. It emphasizes understanding process behavior, operational challenges, and performance optimization. Participants will gain structured knowledge that supports informed technical decision-making and professional competence in oil and gas operations.

Targeted Groups

This Crude Oil Treatment Techniques training targets professionals seeking specialized knowledge and skills:

- Production engineers are involved in upstream oil operations.
- Process engineers work in separation and treatment facilities.
- Oilfield operators are responsible for surface processing units.
- Petroleum engineers seek deeper process understanding.
- Maintenance engineers support treatment equipment.
- Technical supervisors in oil production facilities.
- Quality control personnel in crude handling operations.
- Energy sector professionals transitioning into oil and gas roles.

Course Objectives

Participants will achieve the following objectives by completing the Crude Oil Treatment Techniques course:

- Understand the fundamentals of crude oil composition and impurities.
- Explain the purpose of crude oil treatment in production systems.
- Identify key separation and dehydration principles.
- Describe desalting mechanisms and operational requirements.
- Analyze process flow configurations in treatment facilities.
- Compare physical and chemical treatment methods.
- Understand emulsion formation and breaking techniques.
- Evaluate the role of temperature and pressure in treatment efficiency.
- Recognize common operational problems in crude treatment units.
- Interpret fundamental performance indicators for treatment systems.
- Assess the impact of treatment quality on downstream processes.
- Apply theoretical knowledge to optimize treatment strategies.

Targeted Competencies

Participants will gain the following competencies during the Crude Oil Treatment Techniques program:

- Technical understanding of crude oil treatment processes.
- Ability to interpret treatment system configurations.
- Awareness of water and salt removal mechanisms.
- Knowledge of emulsion behavior and control concepts.
- Familiarity with treatment equipment functions and limitations.
- Analytical thinking related to process efficiency.
- Improved communication using industry-standard terminology.
- Competence in identifying treatment-related operational risks.
- Understanding of quality requirements for treated crude oil.

Studying Scenarios

In this Crude Oil Treatment Techniques training, participants will develop their skills through the analysis of the following scenarios:

- High water cut crude entering surface facilities.
- Stable emulsions affecting dehydration performance.
- Elevated salt content is impacting export specifications.
- Temperature fluctuations reduce treatment efficiency.
- Gas entrainment challenges in separation stages.
- Chemical dosing optimization for emulsion breaking.
- Operational upsets during startup and shutdown phases.

Course Content Outline

Unit 1: Fundamentals of Crude Oil Treatment

- Definition and objectives of crude oil treatment processes.
- Composition of crude oil and associated impurities.
- Classification of water, salts, gases, and solids in crude.
- Importance of treatment for transportation and refining.
- Overview of upstream production and surface facilities.
- Basic process flow of crude oil treatment systems.
- Quality specifications for treated crude oil.

Unit 2: Separation and Dehydration Principles

- Theory of oil, water, and gas separation.
- Gravity separation fundamentals and settling behavior.
- Role of density difference in phase separation.
- Design concepts of separators and treaters.
- Electrostatic dehydration principles and applications.
- Impact of residence time on dehydration efficiency.
- Influence of operating pressure on separation.
- Common dehydration performance limitations.

Unit 3: Emulsion Formation and Treatment

- Nature and types of crude oil emulsions.
- Factors contributing to emulsion stability.
- Role of asphaltenes and solids in emulsions.
- Mechanical methods for emulsion breaking.
- Chemical demulsifiers and their working principles.
- Effect of temperature on emulsion viscosity.
- Mixing and shear impacts on emulsion behavior.
- Monitoring and evaluating emulsion treatment performance.

Unit 4: Desalting and Advanced Treatment Methods

- Purpose and importance of crude oil desalting.
- Sources of salts in the produced crude oil.
- Mechanism of salt removal through water washing.
- Electrostatic desalting system principles.
- Operational parameters affecting desalting efficiency.
- Integration of desalting with dehydration stages.
- Challenges of high salt crude processing.
- Impact of desalting on corrosion control.

Unit 5: Operational Considerations and Optimization

- Process control concepts in crude oil treatment units.
- Key operating variables and their interactions.
- Common operational problems and root causes.
- Effects of feed variability on treatment performance.
- Start-up and shutdown considerations for treaters.
- Safety and integrity aspects of treatment facilities.
- Performance monitoring and basic troubleshooting approaches.
- Theoretical approaches to process optimization and reliability.

Final Insights & Key Takeaways

Crude oil treatment techniques form the foundation of efficient and reliable oil production operations by ensuring product quality and system integrity. Mastery of these principles enables professionals to understand process behavior, anticipate challenges, and support effective operational performance across the oil and gas value chain.