

Tank News

Nebraska State Fire Marshal—Fuels Safety Division

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Fuels Division - FLST Section

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Rule Changes Proposed by U.S. EPA

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published proposed revisions to the underground storage tank regulations on November 18, 2011. The EPA's proposal strengthens the 1988 UST regulations by increasing the emphasis on properly operating and maintaining equipment. The changes also acknowledge the improvements in technology over the last 20 years. They include:

- ◆ Periodic operation and maintenance requirements added.
- ◆ Secondary containment requirements added.
- ◆ Operator training requirements added.
- ◆ Deferrals of certain types of tanks removed.
- ◆ New release prevention and detection technologies added.
- ◆ Other general updates.

Comments are currently being accepted. See www.federalregister.gov/articles/2011/11/18/2011-29293/revising for more information.

Ethanol Blended Fuel

Owners and operators who intend to switch to ethanol blends greater than 10% will need to verify compatibility with their underground storage tank system components before making the change. Contact your SFM field deputy in advance for assistance and completion of the necessary SFM compatibility checklist. Not all UST systems will meet the requirements. On July 5, 2011 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published guidance in the Federal Register regarding compatibility of UST systems with biofuel blends. The guidance discusses how owners and operators who wish to store gasoline containing more than 10 percent ethanol, or diesel containing more than 20 percent biodiesel, may demonstrate compliance. EPA has identified the following UST components for determining compatibility: tanks, piping, line leak detectors, flexible connectors, drop tubes, spill and overflow prevention equipment, floats/sensors/probes, and other components.

Registration and Reporting

To check registration information, go to our website at www.sfm.ne.gov under FUELS/FLST/UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS for a list of UST facilities. Forms are also available on our website if you need to update information, change ownership, product stored or tank status. If you no longer own the tanks, contact us immediately.

Call within 24 hours to report a suspected release.



Clark's Corner

Be Ready for Inspection

Safety inspections are often unannounced. For this reason you may wish to keep your tank records in a notebook (labeled such as "EPA" or "Fuel Tanks") and/or easily identified boxes for your employees to find. Records need to be kept on site for five years. Owners with automatic tank gauges can make an inspection go easier by stapling one monthly pass leak test to the daily inventory worksheet that is reconciled monthly.

Inspectors will be looking for:

Release Detection Records

Including performance claims by release detection manufacturers/ EPA 3rd Party Evaluation and maintenance, repair and calibration of equipment.

Corrosion Protection Records

Repairs, Upgrades and Closure Records

Safety inspections include checking dispensers, fill pipes and sumps for properly maintained equipment, leaks, corrosion, and other issues. Fire safety requirements such as proper venting, drop tubes, signage, and fire extinguishers will also be addressed.



Do you have unattended fueling?

NFPA 30A requires additional signage to warn and alert patrons in case of fire or spill. Also, you need to provide an outside fire extinguisher, emergency shut off, and telephone/call box.



We continue to see fewer releases from underground storage tanks as technology improves and as owners and operators gain experience and make the effort to find problems before they become leaks. The new federal regulations proposed by the U.S. EPA will hopefully assist in guiding owners and operators in maintaining tight systems and to identify problems before they become bigger ones. One significant change in the proposed federal regulations is the requirement of monthly walk-throughs and maintenance checks.

A few trends I would like to highlight involve alternative fuels. We are beginning to see Compressed Natural Gas being used as an alternate fuel. There have been a few installations in the eastern part of the state. Also, we are seeing higher ethanol blends in a greater number of locations.

In recent years, we've dealt with what seems like an endless parade of new regulations—Stage II Vapor Recovery, Secondary Containment, Alternative Fueling, DEF requirements, Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel, SPCC, and no doubt, others I've failed to mention. Now, if someone would just come up with a "crystal ball". This would be really useful to help us determine future infrastructure needs that are necessary to achieve compliance.

As always, we look forward to the year ahead and appreciate your efforts to maintain safe and leak-free tank systems.

Clark Conklin, Chief Deputy

Water in Your Tank That Contains Ethanol?

No level of water is acceptable for ethanol blended fuels due to phase separation. Ethanol has an affinity for water and will be drawn from the gasoline into the water at the bottom of the tank, separating from the gasoline. Check with your service provider or automatic tank gauge manufacturer to determine if your water probe can detect phase separation.

At least one major automatic tank gauge manufacturer has identified the need to retrofit water probes to detect phase separation.

