



# Temporary and Permanent Closure of Underground Storage Tanks

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**F**rom time to time, underground storage tanks (USTs) may not be actively used, for example during a major construction project or during a business closure or sale. An owner may also decide that a tank will never be needed in the future. Certain requirements must be followed by tank owners and operators to ensure that the tank system is protected from corrosion and does not begin to leak when leaving a tank inactive for a period of time, returning a temporarily closed tank to active service, or taking the tank out of service permanently.

## Temporary tank closure

A tank containing product may stand idle for up to 90 days as long as the routine safeguards (corrosion protection and leak detection) continue to be followed. If a tank will be idle for more than 90 days, the owner must do the following:

- Notify the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) of the change of status to Temporarily Closed, by fax or regular mail, using the “Notification of Installation or Change in Status” form.
- Empty the tank (one inch or less of liquid).
- Lock out the fill pipe and ensure the cap is tight to prevent water from entering the tank.
- Secure all pumps and dispensers.
- Leave the vent line open and functioning.

- For any cathodic protection system, continue to meet normal requirements for both tank and piping, i.e. test system every three years (sacrificial anode type) and keep power on, check rectifier bi-monthly, and test system annually (impressed current type).

It is not necessary to conduct monthly leak detection or sump checks on a tank once it has been emptied.

A MPCA inspector who observes a tank which is not in use will place an “orange tag” on the fill pipe, which states that the tank should not be filled or put back into service before contacting the inspector to ensure that requirements have been met.

## Extended temporary closure

Temporarily closed tanks must be permanently closed (see below) at the end of one year, unless the owner has requested and received written MPCA approval to continue in temporary closure. Typical MPCA conditions for extended temporary closure will include:

- For any cathodic protection system, normal requirements have been met and will continue to be met.
- Conduct a site assessment for contamination (soil sampling with laboratory analysis). For more information, see the fact sheet “Site Assessment for Underground Storage Tanks with No Apparent Contamination.”

## Returning a tank to service

If a tank has been temporarily closed for more than one year, the owner must request and receive written MPCA approval to return the tank to service. Typical conditions for MPCA approval will include:

- Notify the MPCA of the change of status to Active, by fax or regular mail, using the “Notification of Installation or Change in Status” form.
- Demonstrate that temporary closure requirements have been met.
- Check for and remove any water in the tank.
- Test any cathodic protection system to make sure it is still working properly.
- For a lined tank, perform an internal tank inspection.
- Conduct a site assessment for contamination.

## Permanent tank closure

Proper procedures for permanently closing a tank are important, because an abandoned tank will eventually leak and collapse as the tank corrodes. There are two methods of permanent closure:

- **Removal:** the tank, piping, and vent line are pulled from the ground.
- **Closure-in-place:** the tank and piping are filled with an inert solid material and left in the ground.

Requirements for permanent closure include:

- Use an MPCA certified contractor. A list of certified contractors is found on the UST Program Web site.
- At least ten days in advance of beginning work, notify the MPCA of the tank closure project by fax, e-mail, regular mail, or telephone, using the “Ten-day Advance Notice” form.
- For closure-in-place, contact the local fire chief who must also give approval.
- Empty and clean the tank and piping (remove any liquids and sludges). The fact sheet “Tank and Waste Petroleum Recyclers” has a list of contractors who perform these services.
- A tank that is removed must be disposed of properly. It may not be reused as a regulated aboveground tank, and may not be reused as a regulated underground tank unless it has been re-certified by the manufacturer. A steel tank may be recycled as scrap metal.

- Conduct a site assessment for contamination.
- Within thirty days after completing work, notify the MPCA of the change in status to Removed or Closed-in-Place, by fax or regular mail, using the “Notification of Installation or Change in Status” form.

For more information on tank removal, see the fact sheet “Planning Ahead for an Underground Storage Tank Removal”.

If your tanks have been unused since prior to December 22, 1988, you may be eligible to have the tanks removed by the Petrofund Abandoned Tank Program. For more information, call the Petrofund at 1-800-638-0418.

## What if contamination is found during closure?

The Petrofund administered by the Department of Commerce provides up to 90 percent reimbursement for costs related to cleanup of petroleum contamination from USTs that are eligible for this funding. If you have questions, you can visit the Petrofund Web site at [www.state.mn.us/portal/mn/jsp/content.do?id=536881377&agency=Commerce](http://www.state.mn.us/portal/mn/jsp/content.do?id=536881377&agency=Commerce) or call 651-215-1775.

## What if the property is sold?

If property containing an active, temporarily closed or permanently closed tank is sold, the seller must notify the buyer of the existence of the tank. Notification must be in writing prior to closing the transaction. It is the buyer’s duty to notify the MPCA of the change in ownership, by fax or regular mail, using the “Notification of Installation or Change in Status” form.

Keep in mind that if you purchase or lease property containing closed tanks, or take over a business which previously operated tanks, you become responsible for meeting and maintaining these tank closure requirements.

## Need more information?

Visit the UST Program at [www.pca.state.mn.us/cleanup/ust.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/cleanup/ust.html). The site has forms, fact sheets, and other information about USTs and UST requirements.

You can also call the MPCA at 651-296-6300 or 1-800-657-3864.