



Emergency Generator Underground Storage Tanks

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This fact sheet explains the requirements for underground storage tanks (USTs) used for fueling emergency generators.

Note: USTs that are used both for fueling emergency generators and for heating (dual use tanks) must follow these requirements rather than the heating oil requirements.

Which tanks are regulated?

Tanks larger than 110 gallons that are used to store fuel underground for an emergency generator are regulated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in order to prevent leaks and spills.

Because emergency generator tanks contain a combustible material, they are also regulated under the Minnesota State Fire Code. For more information, contact your local fire department, or visit the State Fire Marshal Web site at: www.dps.state.mn.us/fmarshal/FireCode/FireCode.html.

What notification is required for tank installation?

Emergency generator tanks may only be installed by MPCA certified contractors. At least ten days in advance of starting tank installation, the contractor or owner must notify the MPCA of the project by fax, e-mail, regular mail, or telephone, using the "Ten-day Advance Notice" form.

Within thirty days after putting the tank into service, the contractor or owner must notify the MPCA by fax or regular mail of the contents, design, and other tank and

facility information using the "Notification of Installation or Change in Status" form.

Thereafter, the tank owner must re-notify within thirty days after of any change to the tank status or information, such as changing owners or closing the tank. Both forms are available on the UST Program Web page. There is no fee for notification.

What tank and piping designs are required to prevent corrosion and contain leaks?

For all emergency generator fueling systems installed after December 22, 2007, secondary containment of tanks and piping (double-walled) is required. Tanks and piping meet this requirement if they are constructed of double-walled fiberglass-reinforced plastic (FRP), of double-walled steel with an FRP jacket, or of double-walled steel with a cathodic protection system. Piping may use any of these designs, or be of double-walled flexible nonmetallic design or be installed inside a liquid-tight pipe chase or sleeve. Systems installed prior to March 24, 2008, are not required to be secondarily contained.

Sacrificial anode-type cathodic protection systems must be tested every three years to insure the system is properly working. For impressed current cathodic protection systems, the rectifier must be checked every sixty days, and a cathodic protection expert must test the system annually.

What about containing spills during tank filling?

Emergency generator tanks must have liquid-tight spill buckets to catch spills that may occur when the delivery hose is disconnected from the fill pipe. Spill buckets must be checked once a month and kept clear of product, water, and debris.

How do I prevent overfills?

Overfill protection is required to prevent emergency generator tanks from being overfilled. There are three options to comply with the requirement – an automatic shutoff (flapper valve), an audible high-level overfill alarm, or a vent pipe flow restrictor (ball float valve).

How do I monitor the tank for leaks?

For emergency generator fueling systems installed after December 22, 2007, monitoring of the secondary containment tank's interstitial space is required. Tanks must either have a continuous sensing device, which is checked for proper function once a year; or the interstitial space must be checked manually once a month.

At this time, emergency generator fueling systems installed prior to December 22, 2007, are not required to be monitored for leaks. However, the MPCA strongly recommends that tank owners conduct leak detection, which will help prevent contamination and costly cleanups from a leaking tank or piping.

Tank leak detection methods that can be used include: automatic tank gauging, statistical inventory reconciliation, and interstitial monitoring of double-walled tanks. Any sumps must be checked monthly and kept clear of fuel, water, and debris.

The MPCA does not consider leak detection to be necessary for safe suction piping systems. For other suction systems, the MPCA recommends precision tightness tests every three years, statistical inventory control, or interstitial monitoring of double-walled piping.

What is required when the tank is no longer used?

If an emergency generator system is operational and is intended to be available for emergency use, the tank is considered active and the owner does not need to notify

the MPCA or close the tank, even if the tank is not actually used for long periods of time. However, if the emergency generator system is taken out of service, the tank must be permanently closed within one year. A tank owner may request MPCA approval to maintain an out of service tank in temporary closure up to five years, so long as certain conditions are followed.

To permanently close an emergency generator tank, it may either be closed in place by being filled with grout or a foam that hardens up, or it may be removed from the ground. Contractors who permanently close a tank must be certified by the MPCA. A list of certified contractors is found on the UST Program Web site. At least ten days in advance of starting work, the contractor or owner must notify the MPCA of the tank closure project by fax, e-mail, regular mail, or telephone, using the "Ten-day Advance Notice" form.

The tank and piping must first be emptied and cleaned, and the contents disposed of properly. A removed tank must be disposed of properly. A site assessment (soil sampling) in the area of the tank is required. Within thirty days after closing the tank, the contractor or owner must notify the MPCA by fax or regular mail using the "Notification of Installation or Change in Status" form.

What if the property is sold?

If property containing an emergency generator tank is sold, the seller must notify the buyer of the existence of the tanks. 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.

Is there funding for cleanup?

The Petrofund administered by the Department of Commerce provides up to 90 percent reimbursement for costs related to cleanup of petroleum contamination from an emergency generator USTs 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.

Need more information?

Visit the UST Program at 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 and ask for the UST Program.