



Minnesota
Pollution
Control
Agency

Spill prevention and preparedness for oil delivery companies

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The 24-hour telephone numbers for the Minnesota Duty Officer are (651) 649-5451 and (800) 422-0798.

Prevention is the key to limiting the potential of having a fuel spill. Good prevention measures take time and effort, but the rewards can save money and prevent headaches. If a fuel spill does occur, being prepared will ensure a quick, effective and efficient response while minimizing environmental and property damage.

Here are some simple but effective spill prevention and preparedness ideas for oil companies:

Keep company records up to date

Review and update your customer list. Ensure that customers who have requested termination of your services are removed from your delivery list. Many fuel oil deliveries have been made to homes which have converted to propane or natural gas and the fuel was pumped into the basement with no tank to receive it. This type of incident could contaminate a drinking water well, ruin a septic system, penetrate concrete block, creating odor problems, or enter a sump system and be pumped to surface waters. These types of cleanups are very costly. Companies could prevent some of these incidents by keeping up-to-date and accurate delivery information on their customers.

Equipment maintenance

Inspect hoses and other equipment for defects, wear or breakdowns on a daily basis to ensure proper and safe operation.

Drivers must know correct delivery information

Compile information which will be helpful to your drivers, such as the type of delivery (continuous fill or call-in), location of fill pipe, and map of property showing locations. Keep this information in a book or on a computer for reference during deliveries and make it company policy that drivers will refer to this information before each delivery.

Establish procedures and train delivery staff

Train delivery staff on safe delivery procedures and handling, how to spot trouble and prevent accidents, basic spill response procedures, and what to do in the event of an emergency. Create a step-by-step process or checklist that will be used for each delivery.

Stock your delivery trucks with a customer reference book, spill kit, gloves and connectors. Spill kits could include a shovel, kitty litter or sorbent pads, and plastic sheeting.

Establish delivery procedures and protocols that minimize the potential for accidents to happen. Check the address and purchase order, and stick the tank or confer with the resident or job site personnel. Assess where or how most accidents occur and work on preventing them in the future.

Develop spill-response procedures and protocols. These should include steps to take to contain a spill, a list of resources available to your employees, and emergency telephone numbers of company staff or cleanup companies. Building a dike to contain a spill will minimize environmental and property damage. Small spills can be cleaned up easily and quickly by spreading a sorbent material to absorb any free liquid which cannot be pumped up.

Any spill, regardless of volume, requires cleanup even if reporting is not required. However, if a petroleum spill is over five gallons, the responsible party must report the spill to the Minnesota Duty Officer. The 24-hour telephone numbers for the Minnesota Duty Officer are (651) 649-5451 and (800) 422-0798. When you report a spill, the Duty Officer can connect you directly with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Emergency Response Team and other state agencies, as needed, to respond to the incident.

Arrange for proper disposal of all the wastes generated. With the exception of used oil, waste generated from petroleum spills that have been reported and cleaned up immediately are exempt from Minnesota's Hazardous Wastes Rules. Waste from used oil spills must be sent to a facility for energy recovery.

Responsibility under the law

According to Minnesota Statute (115E.02), a person who handles or is in control of hazardous substances or oil "shall take reasonable steps to prevent the discharge of those materials in a place or manner that might cause pollution of the land, waters, or air of the state or that might threaten the public's safety or health". Oil delivery companies should be prepared to show what their reasonable prevention steps or delivery protocols are.

For more information

For more information on spill prevention, cleanup and disposal, call the MPCA at (651) 296-6300 or (800) 657-3864 and ask for a member of the Emergency Response Team or go to www.pca.state.mn.us/cleanup/pubs/ertpubs.html on the Internet. More information is available also on the website of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at www.epa.gov/oilspill/.