

Temporary and permanent closure of underground storage tanks

This fact sheet explains the requirements for temporary closure, extending temporary closure, 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) are continued. If a tank will be idle for more than 90 days, the owner must:

- Notify the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) of the change of status to Temporarily Closed, by online submittal of the “UST Change in Status” form found on the UST Program website
- 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).

Monthly leak detection and other maintenance activities are not required on a tank once it has been emptied.

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

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:

- Compliance with temporary closure requirements (as stated above)
- Compliance with any active leak site investigations
- For any cathodic protection system, normal requirements have been met and will continue to be met.
- Completion of the “Application for Extension of Temporary closure” found on the UST program website.

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:

- Check for and remove any water in the tank.
- Test or inspect any cathodic protection system to make sure it is still working properly.
- Tank and line tightness testing, applicable containment testing, and over fill protection testing.
- Compliance with tank system testing and design and construction standards
- Notify the MPCA of the change of status to Active, using the “UST Change in Status” form.

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 removed 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 submitting the “Ten-day Advance Notice” form found on the UST Program Website
- 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 sludge’s). The fact sheet “Fuel-related Wastes” 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 and has secondary containment. 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 submitting “UST notification form” found on the UST Program website

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% 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 website at <https://mn.gov/commerce/industries/fuel/petrofund/> or call 800-638-0418.

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, in writing, prior to closing the transaction. It is the buyer’s duty to notify the MPCA of the change in ownership, by online submittal of the “UST 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 <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/underground-storage-tank-systems>. 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