

Monthly UST walkthrough inspections are your friend



We've all heard about new federal regulations taking effect this October. There are always a lot of questions that come along with new regulations. In a nutshell, gas station owners and operators will need to perform monthly inspections of their facilities every 30 days. There are well over 500,000 active underground storage tanks at over 200,000 locations that will be affected by the new regulations. Do not let the sheer magnitude of tanks scare you! In fact, after reading this blog, you may walk away feeling confident and comfortable with the change. You may even realize that a few dollars spent up front, can save a great deal of headache and cost in the long run.

A Little History

Over 500,000 releases have been reported and confirmed since the beginning of the Underground Storage Tank (UST) program. The releases are caused by leaks, spills, and overfills from UST systems. 87% of those releases have been cleaned up, leaving approximately 70,000 locations still in the process of cleaning up. The average cost of a cleanup affecting only the surrounding soil is \$130,000.00. If groundwater is affected the cost of cleanup may reach into the millions of dollars. Since October 2016, almost 100,000 on-site federally regulated inspections have been conducted (most by states, territories and third parties). The sole purpose is

not to generate fines to the business owner, but to preemptively stop, or reduce the contamination caused by these confirmed releases.

Drip, Trickle, Flow

Have you ever heard the term “drip, trickle, flow”? In many cases, this best defines the life cycle of an onsite release. What starts as an unnoticed drip can quickly become a trickle and jump to a flow one night while you are asleep. This statement is not meant to alarm; but to enlighten! If you can find a problem at the drip stage (which is what the inspections intent is), you can prevent the trickle and flow phase! An example might be a leaking fuel filter under a dispenser, in a containment sump with double wall piping and a sump sensor. Let's pretend that there is a crack in the dispenser sump and the fuel runs out, just as quickly as it leaks in. In this scenario the fuel never touches the sensor or rolls back through the double wall piping to reach the STP sump sensor. Gone unchecked, the leak could continue for weeks, months, or longer, causing a release that reaches groundwater!

Enter the scary and new federally mandated monthly inspection. By performing a routine monthly inspection, you can find the above-mentioned scenario at a drip and prevent a catastrophe. Although the monthly inspection may increase your monthly expenses, it can save millions in the long run...not to mention contamination and devastation to our environment. The inspections will be short and painless and in almost all cases, will NOT interrupt business at all. There are even mobile applications available to assist with the inspection process. These applications house state required inspection templates. The data collected is stored in the cloud and is easily accessible when needed. By performing the walkthrough inspections every 30 days, you can be sure to reduce your chances of experiencing the life changing situation of an impactful release. So, remember... an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

The Regulation

We couldn't leave you without providing at least an overview of the walkthrough inspection regulation. No later than October 13, 2018, the first walkthrough inspection must be conducted. No need to wait, you can begin before the deadline. Think of it as the dress rehearsal. If your UST system receives deliveries at intervals greater than 30 days, spill prevention equipment may be checked prior to each delivery. When the walkthrough is conducted, be sure to check the spill prevention and release detection equipment, containment sumps, and hand held release detection equipment.

JMM Global, a BSM Technologies company, provides environmental compliance expertise and a comprehensive business intelligence platform to manage storage tank systems. We offer alarm management, release detection, event tracking, fuel inventory management, and mobile inspection surveys through our IoT based solutions. For additional information about the new regulations, please visit our website.