



NORTH CAROLINA  
Environmental Quality

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Director

## Important Informational Advisory

Subject: Stage I Vapor Recovery Requirements – Obstructions in Poppet Valves

During recent vapor recovery inspections at gasoline dispensing facilities across North Carolina, Division of Air Quality (DAQ) inspectors have routinely observed rocks or other signs of objects (such as scraps and scratches) in the vapor return line that indicate delivery drivers have been purposefully bypassing the vapor recovery systems. **This is an unacceptable practice by drivers.** The photographs below provide some examples of what DAQ inspectors have been seeing in the field.



The purpose of this letter is not to cite any particular company in violation of North Carolina air quality regulations, but instead to communicate important information to all fuel delivery companies regarding a common problem that DAQ inspectors have seen across the state. Bypassing the vapor recovery



system allows volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the atmosphere, which contributes to poor air quality in North Carolina. Additionally, bypassing the vapor recovery system may cause damage to the vapor recovery equipment, which results in additional repair costs to the tank owners. The most significant concern, however, is that by bypassing the vapor recovery system, a safety hazard is created. Gasoline vapors released to the atmosphere by propping open the poppet valve create an explosive atmosphere that may be triggered by any sort of spark in the area.

DAQ would like to remind you that gasoline delivery personnel are required to properly connect and use the vapor return lines while dispensing gasoline at a facility with Stage I vapor recovery controls in place per 15A NCAC 02D .0928(d). We **strongly** urge you to remind your drivers of the importance of complying with all vapor recovery system control requirements, including keeping the vapor return line free from obstructions. Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to enforcement action against your company including the assessment of civil penalties pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-215.114A.

Enclosed is a copy of 15A NCAC 02D .0928 that will assist in determining your company's compliance status with the rule.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Vapor Recovery Program staff at [daq.msrb.vrecovery@ncdenr.gov](mailto:daq.msrb.vrecovery@ncdenr.gov) or (919) 707-8400.

Sincerely,



Stephen G. Hall  
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Enclosure

