

FARM TANKS

The use of underground storage tanks (USTs) is essential to small town America. They are also used on farms and businesses in rural areas where gasoline stations are not "just around the corner". They provide a convenient way to refuel farm machinery without having to go miles to the nearest town.

Unfortunately, leaking USTs are one of the nation's leading causes of groundwater contamination. They pose the greatest threat in rural America, where a large percentage of the population depends on wells for their drinking water. A leaking UST on a farm may contaminate the household well used for cooking, washing, and bathing. In addition, a release from a UST can contaminate surface water bodies such as irrigation lagoons and streams and rivers with the possibility of poisoning cattle and other livestock.

Proper operation and maintenance of USTs can prevent leaks and minimize costly cleanups.

If your underground storage tank leaks, financial assistance for some of the cleanup may be available from the NC Leaking Petroleum Tank Cleanup Funds.

HOW DO THE REGULATIONS AFFECT YOU?

The state and federal rules define a farm tank as a tank located on farm property devoted to the production of crops or raising animals including fish hatcheries and nurseries with growing operations.

The rules affect you if you own or operate a farm or residential UST to store petroleum products (motor fuels and used waste oil) with a capacity of 1,100 gallons or more. Such a tank is considered regulated and you must meet federal and state requirements for tank registration, financial responsibility, leak detection and the December 1998 UST system upgrade requirement. The requirements for a regulated UST system can be found in 15A NCAC 2N.

In addition, if you own or operate a farm UST that is greater than 110 gallons used to store anti-freeze or other chemicals, such a tank may also be subject to the UST regulations.

The following are examples of tanks that are excluded from regulation and do not need to meet federal and state requirements for UST's:

- Farm and residential tanks of 1,100 gallons or less storing motor fuel used for non-commercial purposes (non-commercial means not for resale);
- Tanks holding heating oil used on the premises;
- Any underground storage tank with 110 gallon or less capacity.

WHAT MUST YOU DO IF YOU OWN A REGULATED UST?

All regulated USTs must receive an operating permit annually and annual operating fees must be paid.

Since December 22, 1993, federal and state rules require you to have leak detection on all regulated USTs.

In addition by **December 22, 1998** existing UST Systems must have installed the following:

- Spill Protection
- Overfill Protection
- Corrosion Protection

If the above items (primarily corrosion protection) were not installed then your tank system must be permanently closed.

UST Systems or components installed on or after November 1, 2007 must meet the secondary containment requirements of 15A NCAC 2N .0900.

For more information about operation or closing your UST system, contact the Division of Waste Management (DWM) UST Section Central Office at 919-707-8171.

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