



Temporarily Removing Petroleum Storage Tanks from Service

A guide for owners and operators of USTs

This is a general guide to laws and regulations for underground storage tanks and an aid in minimizing potential risks; it does not replace those laws and regulations, which take precedence over any information in this publication. If your UST system is located in Kinney, Uvalde, Medina, Bexar, Comal, Hays, Travis, or Williamson county, additional requirements related to protecting the Edwards or the Trinity aquifer may apply (Title 30, Texas Administrative Code [30 TAC], Chapters 213 and 214). In addition to the laws and TCEQ rules, local governments and other state and federal agencies may have rules that apply. The owner and operator are responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Why would I want to temporarily remove my tanks from service?

The TCEQ requires that you temporarily remove your tanks from service when your UST system is no longer required for its intended purpose as explained in 30 TAC §334.54(a). There is always a risk that your tank will release a regulated substance, leading to costly remediation and cleanup fees. To minimize your risk, when your operations temporarily do not require the UST, you should consider emptying it. If you do not plan to use a tank in the future you should budget to permanently remove it from service (see module RG-475m, *Permanently Removing Petroleum Storage Tanks from Service*).

Note: All USTs installed on or before December 22, 1988, should have been upgraded to meet the technical standards for existing UST systems according to the implementation schedule listed in 30 TAC §334.44. If your tank was installed on or before December 22, 1988, and does not meet the technical standards in 30 TAC §334.47, it must follow the requirements for permanent removal from service (see module RG-475m).

What are my options?

If you are considering temporarily removing your UST from service, you can either leave the regulated substance in the tank or have the substance removed.

In accordance with 30 TAC §334.54(d), if you remove the regulated substance from the tank and it is considered “empty,” and if you have checked for releases and performed any necessary corrective action, you are not required to maintain release detection or financial assurance (see the definition of *empty* in the next section).

However, it is recommended that that you retain an invoice and any written documentation from the company that is removing the regulated substance.

Note: If your financial assurance terminates, you must empty your tanks within 90 days or re-obtain financial assurance.

When is my UST considered empty?

For your UST to be classified as empty, all of the following criteria must be met:

- All regulated substances have been removed as completely as possible by accepted industry procedures.
- Any residue from stored regulated substances which remains in the system does not exceed a depth of 2.5 centimeters and does not exceed 0.3 percent by weight of the system at full capacity.
- The volume or concentration of regulated substances remaining in the system will not pose an unreasonable risk to human health or safety or to the environment.

How do I temporarily remove my UST from service?

When temporarily removing your UST from service, you must maintain the system at a standard that prevents contamination of soil and groundwater.

- File an amended UST registration within 30 days of temporary removal of service using the UST Registration and Self-Certification Form (TCEQ-00724).
- Keep all vent lines open and functioning to prevent vapors building up and potentially causing an explosion.
- Cap, plug, or lock piping, pumps, manways, tank access points and ancillary equipment to prevent access, tampering, or vandalism by unauthorized persons.
- Maintain corrosion protection at all times.
- Maintain operator training requirements and continue retraining every three years.
- Unless the UST is emptied of all regulated substances, maintain an approved release detection method and financial assurance.

If a release of a regulated substance is suspected or confirmed, the owner or operator must comply with all requirements for release reporting, investigation, and corrective action.

How do I return my UST to service?

The following steps must be taken before returning the system to service:

- At least 30 days beforehand, notify the TCEQ regional office using the Aboveground and Underground Storage Tank Construction Notification Form (TCEQ-00495).
- For any system out of service for more than six months, have a certified technician complete both tank and piping tightness tests to detect a release as small as 0.1 gallon per hour.

- Ensure that an approved method of release detection is in use.
- Obtain acceptable financial assurance.
- Ensure that approved methods of spill and overflow prevention and control are in use.
- File an amended UST registration within 30 days after returning your UST to service using the UST Registration and Self-Certification Form (TCEQ-00724).

What records must I keep while my UST is temporarily out of service?

At a minimum, records of the following must be maintained for at least five years after the UST system is temporarily removed from service:

- The date of temporary removal from service.
- The name, address, and telephone number of any person who prepared the UST system for temporary removal from service.
- The procedures used to prepare and empty the system.
- Any requests for, and approvals of, extensions of time.

Once the UST has been returned to service, maintain the following information:

- the date returned to service;
- the name, address, and telephone number of any person who conducted the tank and piping tightness tests; and
- the results of the tank and piping tightness tests.

Where do I find more information?

The complete requirements for temporary removal from service for an UST are at 30 TAC 334.54 and 30 TAC 37, Subchapter I.

Additional information on management of USTs can be found in the following TCEQ publications:

- *Licensed Underground Storage Tank Contractors* (RG-475c)
- *Permanently Removing Petroleum Storage Tanks from Service* (RG-475m)
- *Protecting Petroleum Storage Tanks against Corrosion* (RG-475f)
- *Petroleum Storage Tank Release Detection and Inventory Control* (RG-475g)
- *Suspected Releases from Petroleum Storage Tanks* (RG-475h)
- *Petroleum Storage Tank Spill and Overflow Prevention* (RG-475e)
- *Financial Assurance for Petroleum Storage Tanks* (RG-475i)

You can download forms from the TCEQ's website at www.tceq.texas.gov/search_forms.html.

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