



Permanently Removing Petroleum Storage Tanks from Service

A guide for owners and operators of underground storage tanks

Introduction

This is a general guide to laws and regulations about underground storage tanks and an aid in minimizing potential risks; it does not replace those laws and regulations, which take precedence over any information contained herein. If your tank system is located in Kinney, Uvalde, Medina, Bexar, Comal, Hays, Travis, or Williamson County, additional requirements related to the protection of the Edwards or the Trinity Aquifer may apply (Title 30, Texas Administrative Code [30 TAC], Chapters 213 and 214). Besides the TCEQ, 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 regulations.

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

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 no longer require the service of a UST you should permanently remove it.

What are my options?

There are three options for permanently removing your UST from service: remove the tank from the ground, permanently fill the tank in place, or conduct a permanent change in service. Each option has benefits and disadvantages over the other options.

1. Removing the tank from the ground eliminates the chance of future soil contamination. However, it may not be a viable solution if the UST is under a permanent structure.
2. Permanently filling your UST with an inert material may make your property harder to sell in the future, as compared with the other options. A lender or a potential buyer may require additional sampling to ensure that there is no soil contamination. You should also contact the city and county governments to make sure abandonment in place is allowed in your locality.

3. If you carry out a change in service, you must use your UST for a beneficial purpose and the tank must be thoroughly cleaned of all regulated substances prior to reuse. Thoroughly cleaning the UST to prevent contaminating the new stored substance is difficult and may be impractical.

In addition to the benefits and disadvantages of each option, the cost may vary. To determine the best solution, you should discuss with your TCEQ-registered contractor the benefits, disadvantages, and costs of each option.

What requirements apply to each option?

In addition to the general requirements that apply to permanent removal from service, there are specific requirements for each option (**Table 1**).

What records do I need to keep?

Generally you should maintain records of installation and major repair for the life of the UST and records of testing, inspections, basic maintenance, and daily operations for five years. Records of the following must be maintained as long as any UST remains at the facility, or for five years after the final UST is permanently removed from service:

- construction notification and TCEQ approval to permanently remove the UST from service
- the location of the UST permanently removed from service
- the date the UST was permanently removed from service
- methods used to prepare and condition the UST for permanent removal from service
- names, addresses, and phone numbers of all persons who permanently removed the UST from service
- site-assessment reports
- known substance releases
- for any UST removed from the ground, the methods used to handle, transport, store, and dispose of the tank

How can I find a licensed UST contractor and supervisor in my local area?

The TCEQ administers licenses for UST contractors and supervisors. You can find a UST contractor or supervisor in your local area at the TCEQ Web site: <www5.tceq.state.tx.us/oc/olwe/>. For additional information, see *Licensed Underground Storage Tank Contractors* (TCEQ publication RG-475c).

Table 1. Requirements that apply to permanent removal of USTs from service.

| | Remove Tank from Ground | Permanently Fill Tank | Change in Service |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Notify TCEQ 30 days prior to removal (submit Form TCEQ-00495) | X | X | X |
| Notify (and, if necessary, get approval from) local government and fire marshal | X | X | X |
| Notify TCEQ regional office 24 to 72 hours prior to removal | X | X | X |
| Empty UST of all regulated substance and accumulated sludge, and purge vapors | X | X | X |
| Collect samples and assess site to determine if any substances released (submit Form TCEQ-00621) | X | X | X |
| Empty; disconnect; and plug, cap, or remove tank, piping, and ancillary equipment | X | X | |
| Remove UST from site within 24 hours | X | | |
| During temporary storage, ensure no ignition sources are present and prevent unauthorized personnel access | X | X | X |
| Do not store materials for human consumption in the tank | X | X | X |
| Mark on the tank <i>flammable, unusable for storage of materials for human consumption</i> , and list its prior contents in lettering at least 2 inches high | X | | |
| Fill tank with inert material | | X | |
| Notify owners of abandoned tank | | X | |
| Update UST registration form (submit Form TCEQ-00724) | X | X | X |
| Maintain records of removal | X | X | X |

For the site assessment, how many samples must be collected and where should I sample?

The sampling methods, types, location, and number of samples depend on your site. To ensure that any release of a regulated substance is detected and quantified, you must consider the following when designing your sampling plan:

- how your UST is being removed from service
- characteristics of the substance you stored
- characteristics of the backfill material and surrounding soils
- whether groundwater is present, and (if so) its depth with relation to the UST system and the surface of the ground

For additional information on collecting samples, see *Investigating and Reporting Releases from Petroleum Storage Tanks* (RG-411). *Note:* financial assurance must be maintained until sampling results have been obtained and corrective action, if required, has been completed.

Am I required to use a registered UST contractor to conduct soil and groundwater sampling?

It is not a requirement that a registered UST contractor take the samples for your UST site assessment. Rule 30 TAC 334.55 states that any “qualified personnel possessing the appropriate skills, experience, and competence to perform the assessment in accordance with recognized industry standards” are allowed to take the necessary samples. However, the person taking the samples must “be supervised by a person who is currently licensed by the TCEQ as a UST installer or on-site supervisor or currently registered with the TCEQ as a corrective action project manager.”

Can I empty my UST but not permanently remove it from service?

USTs that are emptied, cleaned, and secured but not permanently removed from service are considered temporarily removed from service. USTs temporarily removed from service must maintain corrosion protection and meet all the requirements of 30 TAC 334.54. For additional guidance, see *Temporarily Removing Petroleum Storage Tanks from Service* (RG-475l).

Where do I find more information?

The complete requirements for permanent removal from service of a UST can be found at 30 TAC 334.55.

You can download forms from the TCEQ's Web site at
<www.tceq.state.tx.us/forms>.

You can download publications from the TCEQ's Web site at
<www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications>.

For confidential environmental compliance assistance for small businesses and local governments, contact Small Business and Local Government Assistance via the hot line at 800-447-2827 or online at
<www.sblga.info>.