

Order Type:

Default Shutdown Order

Media:

PST

Small Business:

Yes

Location(s) Where Violation(s) Occurred:

3401 Tom Gill Road, Penitas, Hidalgo County

Type of Operation:

underground storage tank (“UST”) system and a convenience store with retail sales of gasoline

Other Significant Matters:

Additional Pending Enforcement Actions: Yes, 2022-0849-PST-E

Past-Due Penalties: None

Past-Due Fees: None

Other: None

Interested Third Parties: None

Texas Register Publication Date: February 24, 2023

Comments Received: None

Penalty Information

Total Penalty Assessed: \$8,233

Total Paid to General Revenue: \$0

Total Due to General Revenue: \$8,233

Compliance History Classifications:

Person/CN - High

Site/RN - High

Major Source: No

Statutory Limit Adjustment: None

Applicable Penalty Policy: January 28, 2021

Investigation Information

Complaint Date(s): N/A

Date(s) of Investigation: March 8, 2022

Date(s) of NOV(s): N/A

Date(s) of NOE(s): April 8, 2022

Violation Information

1. Failed to demonstrate acceptable financial assurance for taking corrective action and for compensating third parties for bodily injury and property damage caused by accidental releases arising from the operation of petroleum USTs [30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 37.815(a) and (b)].
2. Failed to monitor the USTs for releases in a manner which will detect a release at a frequency of at least once every 30 days [TEX. WATER CODE § 26.3475(c)(1) and 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.50(b)(1)(A)].
3. Failed to provide release detection for the pressurized piping associated with the UST system [TEX. WATER CODE § 26.3475(a) and 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.50(b)(2)].
4. Failed to designate, train, and certify at least one named individual for each class of operator - Class A, Class B, and Class C - for the Facility [30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.602(a)].

Corrective Actions/Technical Requirements

Corrective Action(s) Completed:

None

Technical Requirements:

1. Immediately shut down operations of all USTs at the Facility:
 - a. Cease dispensing fuel from the USTs;
 - b. Cease receiving deliveries of regulated substances into the USTs;
 - c. Padlock the dispensers;
 - d. Empty the USTs of all regulated substances; and
 - e. Temporarily remove the USTs from service.
2. The Facility's UST fuel delivery certificate is revoked immediately. Respondent may submit an application for a new fuel delivery certificate only after Respondent has complied with all of the requirements set forth in the Order, including payment of the administrative penalty in full.
3. The USTs shall remain out of service until such time as Respondent demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Executive Director that the violations have been corrected and Respondent obtains a new fuel delivery certificate for the Facility.
4. Immediately cease accepting fuel at the Facility until such time as a valid delivery certificate is obtained from the TCEQ.
5. Within 10 days Respondent shall surrender the Facility's UST fuel delivery certificate to the TCEQ.
6. Within 15 days submit a detailed written report documenting the steps taken to comply with Technical Requirement Nos. 1, 4 and 5.
7. Prior to receiving deliveries of gasoline and resuming retail sales of gasoline:
 - a. Submit documentation that demonstrates acceptable financial assurance for taking corrective action and for compensating third parties for bodily injury and property damage caused by accidental releases arising from the operation of petroleum USTs;
 - b. Implement a release detection method for all USTs at the Facility;
 - c. Conduct the annual line leak detector and piping tightness tests;
 - d. Designate, train, and certify at least one named individual as a Class A, Class B, and Class C Operator for the Facility; and
 - e. Obtain a new fuel delivery certificate.

8. Upon obtaining a new fuel delivery certificate, post the fuel delivery certificate in a location at the Facility where the delivery certificate is clearly visible at all times.
9. Within 10 days of resuming sales of gasoline, submit written certification to demonstrate compliance with Technical Requirements Nos. 7 and 8.

Litigation Information

Date Petition(s) Filed: November 3, 2022
Date Green Card(s) Signed: November 5, 2022
Date Answer(s) Filed: N/A

Contact Information

TCEQ Attorneys: Jess Robinson, Litigation Division, (512) 239-3400
Sheldon Wayne, Public Interest Counsel, (512) 239-6363
TCEQ Litigation Agenda Coordinator: Katherine McKenzie, Litigation Division, (512) 239-2575
TCEQ Enforcement Coordinator: Karolyn Kent, Enforcement Division, (512) 239-2536
TCEQ Regional Contact: Jaime A. Garza, Harlingen Regional Office, (956) 425-6010
Respondent Contact: Mohammed Kabir, Governing Person, SORT Valley LLC, 3401 Tom Gill Road, Penitas, Texas 78576-7399
Respondent's Attorney: N/A

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Penalty Calculation Worksheet (PCW)

Policy Revision 5 (January 28, 2021)

PCW Revision February 11, 2021

DATES	Assigned	11-Apr-2022	Screening	15-Apr-2022	EPA Due	
	PCW	25-Jul-2022				

RESPONDENT/FACILITY INFORMATION	
Respondent	SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3
Reg. Ent. Ref. No.	RN102283652
Facility/Site Region	15-Harlingen
Major/Minor Source	Minor

CASE INFORMATION			
Enf./Case ID No.	62216	No. of Violations	3
Docket No.	2022-0458-PST-E	Order Type	1660
Media Program(s)	Petroleum Storage Tank	Government/Non-Profit	No
Multi-Media		Enf. Coordinator	Karolyn Kent
		EC's Team	Enforcement Team 6
Admin. Penalty \$ Limit Minimum	\$0	Maximum	\$25,000

Penalty Calculation Section

TOTAL BASE PENALTY (Sum of violation base penalties)	Subtotal 1	\$7,500
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ADJUSTMENTS (+/-) TO SUBTOTAL 1

Subtotals 2-7 are obtained by multiplying the Total Base Penalty (Subtotal 1) by the indicated percentage.

Compliance History	-10.0% Adjustment	Subtotals 2, 3, & 7	-\$750
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Notes: Reduction for High Performer classification.

Culpability	No	0.0% Enhancement	Subtotal 4	\$0
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Notes: The Respondent does not meet the culpability criteria.

Good Faith Effort to Comply Total Adjustments	Subtotal 5	\$0
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Economic Benefit	0.0% Enhancement*	Subtotal 6	\$0
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Total EB Amounts: \$872
 Estimated Cost of Compliance: \$3,749
 *Capped at the Total EB \$ Amount

SUM OF SUBTOTALS 1-7	Final Subtotal	\$6,750
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OTHER FACTORS AS JUSTICE MAY REQUIRE	22.0% Adjustment	\$1,483
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Reduces or enhances the Final Subtotal by the indicated percentage.

Notes: Enhancement to capture the avoided cost of compliance associated with Violation Nos. 1 and 2 (\$733). Recommended adjustment to offset High Performer classification (\$750).

Final Penalty Amount	\$8,233
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STATUTORY LIMIT ADJUSTMENT	Final Assessed Penalty	\$8,233
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DEFERRAL	0.0% Reduction Adjustment	\$0
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Reduces the Final Assessed Penalty by the indicated percentage.

Notes: Deferral not offered for non-expedited settlement.

PAYABLE PENALTY	\$8,233
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Screening Date 15-Apr-2022

Docket No. 2022-0458-PST-E

PCW

Respondent SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3

Policy Revision 5 (January 28, 2021)

Case ID No. 62216

PCW Revision February 11, 2021

Reg. Ent. Reference No. RN102283652

Media Petroleum Storage Tank

Enf. Coordinator Karolyn Kent

Compliance History Worksheet

>> Compliance History Site Enhancement (Subtotal 2)

Component	Number of...	Number	Adjust.
NOVs	Written notices of violation ("NOVs") with same or similar violations as those in the current enforcement action (<i>number of NOVs meeting criteria</i>)	0	0%
	Other written NOVs	0	0%
Orders	Any agreed final enforcement orders containing a denial of liability (<i>number of orders meeting criteria</i>)	0	0%
	Any adjudicated final enforcement orders, agreed final enforcement orders without a denial of liability, or default orders of this state or the federal government, or any final prohibitory emergency orders issued by the commission	0	0%
Judgments and Consent Decrees	Any non-adjudicated final court judgments or consent decrees containing a denial of liability of this state or the federal government (<i>number of judgments or consent decrees meeting criteria</i>)	0	0%
	Any adjudicated final court judgments and default judgments, or non-adjudicated final court judgments or consent decrees without a denial of liability, of this state or the federal government	0	0%
Convictions	Any criminal convictions of this state or the federal government (<i>number of counts</i>)	0	0%
Emissions	Chronic excessive emissions events (<i>number of events</i>)	0	0%
Audits	Letters notifying the executive director of an intended audit conducted under the Texas Environmental, Health, and Safety Audit Privilege Act, 74th Legislature, 1995 (<i>number of audits for which notices were submitted</i>)	0	0%
	Disclosures of violations under the Texas Environmental, Health, and Safety Audit Privilege Act, 74th Legislature, 1995 (<i>number of audits for which violations were disclosed</i>)	0	0%
Other	Environmental management systems in place for one year or more	No	0%
	Voluntary on-site compliance assessments conducted by the executive director under a special assistance program	No	0%
	Participation in a voluntary pollution reduction program	No	0%
	Early compliance with, or offer of a product that meets future state or federal government environmental requirements	No	0%

Adjustment Percentage (Subtotal 2) 0%

>> Repeat Violator (Subtotal 3)

No

Adjustment Percentage (Subtotal 3) 0%

>> Compliance History Person Classification (Subtotal 7)

High Performer

Adjustment Percentage (Subtotal 7) -10%

>> Compliance History Summary

Compliance History Notes

Reduction for High Performer classification.

Total Compliance History Adjustment Percentage (Subtotals 2, 3, & 7) -10%

>> Final Compliance History Adjustment

Final Adjustment Percentage *capped at 100% -10%

Screening Date 15-Apr-2022
Respondent SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3
Case ID No. 62216
Reg. Ent. Reference No. RN102283652
Media Petroleum Storage Tank
Enf. Coordinator Karolyn Kent

Docket No. 2022-0458-PST-E

PCW

Policy Revision 5 (January 28, 2021)

PCW Revision February 11, 2021

Violation Number 1

Rule Cite(s)

30 Tex. Admin. Code § 37.815(a) and (b)

Violation Description

Failed to demonstrate acceptable financial assurance for taking corrective action and for compensating third parties for bodily injury and property damage caused by accidental releases arising from the operation of petroleum underground storage tanks ("USTs"). Specifically, the last financial assurance policy expired on November 2, 2021.

Base Penalty \$25,000

>> Environmental, Property and Human Health Matrix

OR

Release	Harm		
	Major	Moderate	Minor
Actual			
Potential			

Percent 0.0%

>> Programmatic Matrix

Falsification	Major	Moderate	Minor
	X		

Percent 10.0%

Matrix Notes

100% of the rule requirement was not met.

Adjustment \$22,500

\$2,500

Violation Events

Number of Violation Events 1

164 Number of violation days

daily	
weekly	
monthly	
quarterly	
semiannual	
annual	
single event	X

Violation Base Penalty \$2,500

One single event is recommended.

Good Faith Efforts to Comply

0.0%

Reduction \$0

Before NOE/NOV NOE/NOV to EDPRP/Settlement Offer

Extraordinary		
Ordinary		
N/A	X	

Notes

The Respondent does not meet the good faith criteria for this violation.

Violation Subtotal \$2,500

Economic Benefit (EB) for this violation

Statutory Limit Test

Estimated EB Amount \$674

Violation Final Penalty Total \$2,744

This violation Final Assessed Penalty (adjusted for limits) \$2,744

Economic Benefit Worksheet

Respondent SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3
Case ID No. 62216
Reg. Ent. Reference No. RN102283652
Media Petroleum Storage Tank
Violation No. 1

Percent Interest	Years of Depreciation
5.0	15

Item Description	Item Cost	Date Required	Final Date	Yrs	Interest Saved	Costs Saved	EB Amount
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Delayed Costs

Equipment				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Buildings				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (as needed)				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Engineering/Construction				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Land				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Record Keeping System				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Training/Sampling				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Remediation/Disposal				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Permit Costs				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Other (as needed)	\$1,320	8-Mar-2022	5-Feb-2023	0.92	\$60	n/a	\$60

Notes for DELAYED costs

Estimated delayed cost to provide financial assurance for two petroleum USTs (\$660 per UST). The Date Required is the investigation date, and the Final Date is the estimated date of compliance.

Avoided Costs

ANNUALIZE avoided costs before entering item (except for one-time avoided costs)

Disposal				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personnel				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Inspection/Reporting/Sampling				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies/Equipment				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Financial Assurance	\$1,320	2-Nov-2021	15-Apr-2022	0.45	\$21	\$593	\$614
ONE-TIME avoided costs				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (as needed)				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0

Notes for AVOIDED costs

Estimated avoided cost to provide financial assurance for two petroleum USTs (\$660 per tank). The Date Required is the expiration date of the last policy, and the Final Date is the screening date.

Approx. Cost of Compliance

\$1,913

TOTAL

\$674

Screening Date 15-Apr-2022 **Docket No.** 2022-0458-PST-E **PCW**
Respondent SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3 *Policy Revision 5 (January 28, 2021)*
Case ID No. 62216 *PCW Revision February 11, 2021*
Reg. Ent. Reference No. RN102283652
Media Petroleum Storage Tank
Enf. Coordinator Karolyn Kent

Violation Number 2
Rule Cite(s) 30 Tex. Admin. Code § 334.50(b)(1)(A) and (b)(2) and Tex. Water Code § 26.3475(a) and (c)(1)
Violation Description Failed to monitor the USTs for releases in a manner which will detect a release at a frequency of at least once every 30 days. Also, failed to provide release detection for the pressurized piping associated with the UST system. Specifically, the Respondent had not conducted the annual line leak detector and piping tightness tests.

Base Penalty \$25,000

>> Environmental, Property and Human Health Matrix

Release	Harm			Percent
	Major	Moderate	Minor	
Actual				15.0%
Potential	X			

>> Programmatic Matrix

Falsification	Major	Moderate	Minor	Percent
				0.0%

Matrix Notes Human health or the environment will or could be exposed to pollutants that would exceed levels that are protective of human health or environmental receptors as a result of the violation.

Adjustment \$21,250

\$3,750

Violation Events

Number of Violation Events 1 38 Number of violation days

daily	
weekly	
monthly	
quarterly	X
semiannual	
annual	
single event	

Violation Base Penalty \$3,750

One quarterly event is recommended from the March 8, 2022 investigation date to the April 15, 2022 screening date.

Good Faith Efforts to Comply 0.0% Reduction \$0

	Before NOE/NOV	NOE/NOV to EDRP/Settlement Offer
Extraordinary		
Ordinary		
N/A	X	

Notes The Respondent does not meet the good faith criteria for this violation.

Violation Subtotal \$3,750

Economic Benefit (EB) for this violation **Statutory Limit Test**

Estimated EB Amount \$193 **Violation Final Penalty Total** \$4,117

This violation Final Assessed Penalty (adjusted for limits) \$4,117

Economic Benefit Worksheet

Respondent SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3
Case ID No. 62216
Reg. Ent. Reference No. RN102283652
Media Petroleum Storage Tank
Violation No. 2

Percent Interest	Years of Depreciation
5.0	15

Item Description	Item Cost	Date Required	Final Date	Yrs	Interest Saved	Costs Saved	EB Amount
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Delayed Costs

Equipment				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Buildings				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (as needed)				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Engineering/Construction				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Land				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Record Keeping System				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Training/Sampling	\$118	8-Mar-2022	5-Feb-2023	0.92	\$5	n/a	\$5
Remediation/Disposal				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Permit Costs				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Other (as needed)	\$1,500	8-Mar-2022	5-Feb-2023	0.92	\$69	n/a	\$69

Notes for DELAYED costs

Estimated delayed cost to implement a release detection method for the USTs at the Facility (\$1,500), and to conduct the annual line leak detector and piping tightness tests (\$118). The Dates Required are the investigation date, and the Final Dates are the estimated date of compliance.

Avoided Costs

ANNUALIZE avoided costs before entering item (except for one-time avoided costs)

Disposal				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personnel				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Inspection/Reporting/Sampling				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies/Equipment				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Financial Assurance				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
ONE-TIME avoided costs	\$118	8-Mar-2022	15-Apr-2022	0.10	\$1	\$118	\$119
Other (as needed)				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0

Notes for AVOIDED costs

Estimated avoided cost to conduct the annual line leak detector and piping tightness tests. The Date Required is the investigation date, and the Final Date is the screening date.

Approx. Cost of Compliance

\$1,736

TOTAL

\$193

Screening Date 15-Apr-2022 **Docket No.** 2022-0458-PST-E **PCW**
Respondent SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3 *Policy Revision 5 (January 28, 2021)*
Case ID No. 62216 *PCW Revision February 11, 2021*
Reg. Ent. Reference No. RN102283652
Media Petroleum Storage Tank
Enf. Coordinator Karolyn Kent

Violation Number

Rule Cite(s)

Violation Description Failed to designate, train, and certify at least one named individual for each class of operator – Class A, Class B, and Class C for the Facility. Specifically, the Facility did not have a Class A, Class B, or Class C operator.

Base Penalty

>> Environmental, Property and Human Health Matrix

OR	Release	Harm			Percent
		Major	Moderate	Minor	
		Actual	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Potential	<input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>		

>> Programmatic Matrix

	Falsification	Major	Moderate	Minor	Percent
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="0.0%"/>

Matrix Notes Human health or the environment will or could be exposed to significant amounts of pollutants that would not exceed levels that are protective of human health or environmental receptors as a result of the violation.

Adjustment

Violation Events

Number of Violation Events Number of violation days

daily	<input type="text"/>
weekly	<input type="text"/>
monthly	<input type="text"/>
quarterly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
semiannual	<input type="text"/>
annual	<input type="text"/>
single event	<input type="text"/>

Violation Base Penalty

One quarterly event is recommended from the March 8, 2022 investigation date to the April 15, 2022 screening date.

Good Faith Efforts to Comply Reduction

	Before NOE/NOV	NOE/NOV to EDRP/Settlement Offer
Extraordinary	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Ordinary	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

Notes The Respondent does not meet the good faith criteria for this violation.

Violation Subtotal

Economic Benefit (EB) for this violation **Statutory Limit Test**

Estimated EB Amount **Violation Final Penalty Total**

This violation Final Assessed Penalty (adjusted for limits)

Economic Benefit Worksheet

Respondent SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3
Case ID No. 62216
Reg. Ent. Reference No. RN102283652
Media Petroleum Storage Tank
Violation No. 3

Percent Interest	Years of Depreciation
5.0	15

Item Description	Item Cost	Date Required	Final Date	Yrs	Interest Saved	Costs Saved	EB Amount
------------------	-----------	---------------	------------	-----	----------------	-------------	-----------

Delayed Costs

Equipment				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Buildings				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (as needed)				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Engineering/Construction				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Land				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Record Keeping System				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Training/Sampling	\$100	8-Mar-2022	5-Feb-2023	0.92	\$5	n/a	\$5
Remediation/Disposal				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Permit Costs				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Other (as needed)				0.00	\$0	n/a	\$0
Notes for DELAYED costs	Estimated delayed cost to designate, train, and certify at least one named individual as a Class A and Class B operator (\$90), and Class C operator (\$10) for the Facility. The Date Required is the investigation date, and the Final Date is the estimated date of compliance.						

Avoided Costs

ANNUALIZE avoided costs before entering item (except for one-time avoided costs)

Disposal				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personnel				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Inspection/Reporting/Sampling				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies/Equipment				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Financial Assurance				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
ONE-TIME avoided costs				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (as needed)				0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Notes for AVOIDED costs							

Approx. Cost of Compliance \$100

TOTAL \$5



Compliance History Report

Compliance History Report for CN605482827, RN102283652, Rating Year 2021 which includes Compliance History (CH) components from September 1, 2016, through August 31, 2021.

Customer, Respondent, or Owner/Operator: CN605482827, SORT Valley LLC **Classification:** HIGH **Rating:** 0.00

Regulated Entity: RN102283652, MiniMax 3 **Classification:** HIGH **Rating:** 0.00

Complexity Points: 2 **Repeat Violator:** NO

CH Group: 01 - Gas Stations with convenience Stores and other Gas Stations

Location: 3401 Tom Gill Road, Penitas, Hidalgo County, Texas 78576-7399

TCEQ Region: REGION 15 - HARLINGEN

ID Number(s):

PETROLEUM STORAGE TANK REGISTRATION
REGISTRATION 55005

Compliance History Period: September 01, 2016 to August 31, 2021 **Rating Year:** 2021 **Rating Date:** 09/01/2021

Date Compliance History Report Prepared: April 11, 2022

Agency Decision Requiring Compliance History: Enforcement

Component Period Selected: April 11, 2017 to April 11, 2022

TCEQ Staff Member to Contact for Additional Information Regarding This Compliance History.

Name: Karolyn Kent

Phone: (512) 239-2536

Site and Owner/Operator History:

- 1) Has the site been in existence and/or operation for the full five year compliance period? YES
- 2) Has there been a (known) change in ownership/operator of the site during the compliance period? YES
- 3) Who is the current owner/operator? SORT Valley LLC OWNER OPERATOR since 3/20/2018
- 4) Who was/were the prior owner(s)/operator(s)? Stassney Quick Mart Inc., OWNER OPERATOR, 11/1/2012 to 3/19/2018

Components (Multimedia) for the Site Are Listed in Sections A - J

A. Final Orders, court judgments, and consent decrees:

N/A

B. Criminal convictions:

N/A

C. Chronic excessive emissions events:

N/A

D. The approval dates of investigations (CCEDS Inv. Track. No.):

Item 1 April 11, 2019 (1552324)

E. Written notices of violations (NOV) (CCEDS Inv. Track. No.):

A notice of violation represents a written allegation of a violation of a specific regulatory requirement from the commission to a regulated entity. A notice of violation is not a final enforcement action, nor proof that a violation has actually occurred.

N/A

F. Environmental audits:

N/A

G. Type of environmental management systems (EMSs):

N/A

H. Voluntary on-site compliance assessment dates:

N/A

I. Participation in a voluntary pollution reduction program:

N/A

J. Early compliance:

N/A

Sites Outside of Texas:

N/A

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



IN THE MATTER OF AN
ENFORCEMENT ACTION
CONCERNING
SORT VALLEY LLC DBA MINIMAX 3;
RN102283652

§
§
§
§
§

BEFORE THE
TEXAS COMMISSION ON
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

DEFAULT AND SHUTDOWN ORDER

DOCKET NO. 2022-0458-PST-E

On _____, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (“Commission” or “TCEQ”) considered the Executive Director’s Preliminary Report and Petition, filed pursuant to TEX. WATER CODE chs. 7 and 26 and the rules of the TCEQ, which requests appropriate relief, including the imposition of an administrative penalty, corrective action of the respondent, and revocation of the facility’s fuel delivery certificate. The Commission also considered the Executive Director’s Motion requesting the entry of an Order requiring the respondent to shut down and remove from service the underground storage tanks (“USTs”) located at 3401 Tom Gill Road in Penitas, Hidalgo County, Texas. The respondent made the subject of this Order is SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3 (“Respondent”).

The Commission makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent owns and operates, as defined in 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.2(78) and (75), a UST system and a convenience store with retail sales of gasoline located at 3401 Tom Gill Road in Penitas, Hidalgo County, Texas (Facility ID No. 55005) (the “Facility”). The USTs at the Facility are not exempt or excluded from regulation under the Texas Water Code or the rules of the TCEQ, and contain a regulated petroleum substance as defined in the rules of the TCEQ.
2. During an investigation conducted on and around March 8, 2022, an investigator documented that Respondent:
 - a. Failed to demonstrate acceptable financial assurance for taking corrective action and for compensating third parties for bodily injury and property damage caused by accidental releases arising from the operation of petroleum USTs. Specifically, the financial assurance policy expired on November 2, 2021;
 - b. Failed to monitor the USTs for releases in a manner which will detect a release at a frequency of at least once every 30 days;
 - c. Failed to provide release detection for the pressurized piping associated with the UST system. Specifically, Respondent had not conducted the annual line leak detector and piping tightness tests; and
 - d. Failed to designate, train, and certify at least one named individual for each class of operator – Class A, Class B, and Class C – for the Facility. Specifically, the Facility did not have a Class A, Class B, or Class C operator.
3. By letter dated April 8, 2022, Respondent was provided with written notice of the violations and of TCEQ’s authority to shut down and remove from service USTs not in compliance with release detection, spill and/or overfill prevention, corrosion protection, and/or financial assurance requirements if the violations were not corrected.

4. The Executive Director filed the “Executive Director’s Preliminary Report and Petition Recommending that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Enter an Enforcement Order Assessing an Administrative Penalty Against and Requiring Certain Actions of SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3” (the “EDPRP”) in the TCEQ Chief Clerk’s office on November 3, 2022.
5. By letter dated November 3, 2022, sent to Respondent’s last known address via certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid, the Executive Director served Respondent with notice of the EDPRP. According to the return receipt “green card,” Respondent received notice of the EDPRP on November 5, 2022, as evidenced by the signature on the card.
6. More than 20 days have elapsed since Respondent received notice of the EDPRP. Respondent failed to file an answer and failed to request a hearing.
7. By letter dated December 27, 2022, the Executive Director provided Respondent with notice of TCEQ’s intent to order the USTs at the Facility to be shut down and removed from service if Respondent failed to correct the release detection and financial assurance violations within 30 days after Respondent’s receipt of the notice.
8. As of the date of entry of this Order, Respondent has not provided the Executive Director with documentation demonstrating that the release detection and financial assurance violations alleged in Findings of Fact Nos. 2.a. through 2.c. have been corrected.
9. The USTs at the Facility do not have release detection and financial assurance as required by TEX. WATER CODE § 26.3475(a) and (c)(1), and 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §§ 37.815(a), 37.815(b), 334.50(b)(1)(A), and 334.50(b)(2), and may be releasing petroleum products to the environment. Therefore, conditions at the Facility constitute an imminent peril to public health, safety, and welfare.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. As evidenced by Finding of Fact No. 1, Respondent is subject to the jurisdiction of the TCEQ pursuant to TEX. WATER CODE ch. 26 and the rules of the TCEQ.
2. As evidenced by Finding of Fact No. 2.a., Respondent failed to demonstrate acceptable financial assurance for taking corrective action and for compensating third parties for bodily injury and property damage caused by accidental releases arising from the operation of petroleum USTs, in violation of 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 37.815(a) and (b).
3. As evidenced by Finding of Fact No. 2.b., Respondent failed to monitor the USTs for releases in a manner which will detect a release at a frequency of at least once every 30 days, in violation of TEX. WATER CODE § 26.3475(c)(1) and 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.50(b)(1)(A).
4. As evidenced by Finding of Fact No. 2.c., Respondent failed to provide release detection for the pressurized piping associated with the UST system, in violation of TEX. WATER CODE § 26.3475(a) and 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.50(b)(2). Specifically, Respondent had not conducted the annual line leak detector and piping tightness tests.
5. As evidenced by Finding of Fact No. 2.d., Respondent failed to designate, train, and certify at least one named individual for each class of operator - Class A, Class B, and Class C - for the Facility, in violation of 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.602(a).
6. As evidenced by Findings of Fact Nos. 4 and 5, the Executive Director timely served Respondent with proper notice of the EDPRP, as required by TEX. WATER CODE § 7.055 and 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 70.104(b)(1).

7. As evidenced by Finding of Fact No. 6, Respondent failed to file a timely answer as required by TEX. WATER CODE § 7.056 and 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 70.105. Pursuant to TEX. WATER CODE § 7.057 and 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 70.106, the Commission may enter a Default Order against Respondent and assess the penalty recommended by the Executive Director.
8. Pursuant to TEX. WATER CODE § 7.051, the Commission has the authority to assess an administrative penalty against Respondent for violations of state statutes within TCEQ's jurisdiction, for violations of rules adopted under such statutes, or for violations of orders or permits issued under such statutes.
9. An administrative penalty in the amount of eight thousand two hundred thirty-three dollars (\$8,233.00) is justified by the facts recited in this Order, and considered in light of the factors set forth in TEX. WATER CODE § 7.053.
10. As evidenced by Findings of Fact Nos. 2.a. through 2.c., 3, 7, and 8, Respondent failed to correct documented violations of TCEQ release detection and financial assurance requirements within 30 days after Respondent received notice of the violations and notice of the Executive Director's intent to shut down the USTs at the Facility.
11. TEX. WATER CODE §§ 26.3475(e) and 26.352(i) authorize the Commission to order a UST owner or operator to shut down a UST system if, within 30 days after receiving notice of the violations, the owner or operator fails to correct violations of TCEQ regulatory requirements relating to release detection for tanks and/or piping, spill and/or overfill prevention for tanks, corrosion protection for tanks and/or piping, and/or acceptable financial assurance.
12. TEX. WATER CODE §§ 5.102 and 7.002 authorize the Commission to issue orders and make determinations necessary to effectuate the purposes of the statutes within its jurisdiction.
13. Pursuant to 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.8(c)(6), the Commission has authority to revoke the Facility's UST fuel delivery certificate if the Commission finds that good cause exists.
14. Good cause for revocation of the Facility's UST fuel delivery certificate exists as justified by Findings of Fact Nos. 2 and 4 through 6, and Conclusions of Law Nos. 2 through 7.
15. As evidenced by Findings of Fact Nos. 8 and 9, current conditions at the Facility constitute an imminent peril to public health, safety, and welfare. Therefore, pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act, TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.144(a)(3), this Order is final and effective on the date it is signed by the Commission.

ORDERING PROVISIONS

NOW, THEREFORE, THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ORDERS that:

1. Immediately upon the effective date of this Order, Respondent shall take the following steps to shut down operations of all USTs at the Facility:
 - a. Cease dispensing fuel from the USTs;
 - b. Cease receiving deliveries of regulated substances into the USTs;
 - c. Secure the dispensers to prevent access;
 - d. Empty the USTs of all regulated substances in accordance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.54(d); and
 - e. Temporarily remove the USTs from service in accordance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.54.

2. The Facility's UST fuel delivery certificate is revoked immediately upon the effective date of this Order. Respondent may submit an application for a new fuel delivery certificate only after Respondent has complied with all of the requirements set forth in this Order, including payment of the administrative penalty in full.
3. The USTs at the Facility shall remain out of service, pursuant to TEX. WATER CODE §§ 26.3475(e) and 26.352(i) and as directed by Ordering Provision Nos. 1.a. through 1.e. until such time as Respondent demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Executive Director that the release detection and financial assurance violations noted in Conclusions of Law Nos. 2 through 4 have been corrected and Respondent obtains a new fuel delivery certificate for the Facility.
4. Immediately upon the effective date of this Order, Respondent shall cease accepting fuel at the Facility until such time as a valid delivery certificate is obtained from the TCEQ in accordance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §§ 334.7 and 334.8.
5. Within 10 days after the effective date of this Order, Respondent shall send the Facility's UST fuel delivery certificate to:

Petroleum Storage Tank Registration Team, MC 138
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087
6. Within 15 days after the effective date of this Order, Respondent shall submit a detailed written report, in accordance with Ordering Provision No. 13, below, documenting the steps taken to comply with Ordering Provision Nos. 1.a. through 1.e., 4 and 5.
7. If Respondent elects to permanently remove from service any portion of the UST system at the Facility, Respondent shall, immediately upon the effective date of this Order, permanently remove the UST system from service in accordance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.55, and within 15 days after the effective date of this Order, shall submit a written report documenting compliance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.55 to:

Petroleum Storage Tank Registration Team, MC 138
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087
8. Respondent is assessed an administrative penalty in the amount of eight thousand two hundred thirty-three dollars (\$8,233.00) for violations of state statutes and rules of the TCEQ. The payment of this penalty and Respondent's compliance with all the requirements set forth in this Order resolve only the matters set forth by this Order in this action. The Commission shall not be constrained in any manner from requiring corrective actions or penalties for violations which are not raised here.
9. The penalty assessed by this Order shall be paid within 30 days after the effective date of this Order. All checks submitted to pay the penalty imposed by this Order shall be made out to TCEQ and shall be sent with the notation "Re: SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3; Docket No. 2022-0458-PST-E" to:

Financial Administration Division, Revenue Operations Section
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Attention: Cashier's Office, MC 214
P.O. Box 13088
Austin, Texas 78711-3088

10. Prior to receiving deliveries of gasoline and resuming retail sales of gasoline, Respondent shall undertake the following technical requirements:
 - a. Submit documentation that demonstrates acceptable financial assurance for taking corrective action and for compensating third parties for bodily injury and property damage caused by accidental releases arising from the operation of petroleum USTs, in accordance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 37.815(a) and (b);
 - b. Implement a release detection method for all USTs at the Facility, in accordance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.50(b)(1)(A);
 - c. Conduct the annual line leak detector and piping tightness tests, in accordance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.50(b)(2);
 - d. Designate, train, and certify at least one named individual as a Class A, Class B, and Class C Operator for the Facility, in accordance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.602(a); and
 - e. Obtain a new fuel delivery certificate from the TCEQ.
11. Upon obtaining a new fuel delivery certificate, Respondent shall post the fuel delivery certificate in a location at the Facility where the delivery certificate is clearly visible at all times, in accordance with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 334.8(c)(5)(A)(iii).
12. Within 10 days of resuming retail sales of gasoline, Respondent shall submit written certification, in accordance with Ordering Provision No. 13, below, to demonstrate compliance with Ordering Provision Nos. 10 and 11.
13. The certifications required by these Ordering Provisions shall be accompanied by detailed supporting documentation, including photographs, receipts, and/or other records, shall be signed by Respondent, and shall include the following certification language:

“I certify under penalty of law that I have personally examined and am familiar with the information submitted and all attached documents, and that based on my inquiry of those individuals immediately responsible for obtaining the information, I believe that the submitted information is true, accurate and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.”

Respondent shall submit the written certifications and supporting documentation necessary to demonstrate compliance with these Ordering Provisions to:

Enforcement Division, MC 149A
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

and:

Waste Section Manager
Harlingen Regional Office
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
1804 W Jefferson Ave,
Harlingen, Texas 78550-5247

14. All relief not expressly granted in this Order is denied.
15. The provisions of this Order shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent. Respondent is ordered to give notice of this Order to personnel who maintain day-to-day control over the Facility operations referenced in this Order.

16. The Executive Director may grant an extension of any deadline in this Order or in any plan, report, or other document submitted pursuant to this Order, upon a written and substantiated showing of good cause. All requests for extensions by Respondent shall be made in writing to the Executive Director. Extensions are not effective until Respondent receives written approval from the Executive Director. The determination of what constitutes good cause rests solely with the Executive Director. Extension requests shall be sent to the Enforcement Division at the address listed above.
17. If Respondent fails to comply with any of the Ordering Provisions in this Order within the prescribed schedules, and that failure is caused solely by an act of God, war, strike, riot, or other catastrophe, Respondent's failure to comply is not a violation of this Order. Respondent shall have the burden of establishing to the Executive Director's satisfaction that such an event has occurred. Respondent shall notify the Executive Director within seven days after Respondent becomes aware of a delaying event and shall take all reasonable measures to mitigate and minimize any delay.
18. The Executive Director may refer this matter to the Office of the Attorney General of the State of Texas ("OAG") for further enforcement proceedings without notice to Respondent if the Executive Director determines that Respondent has not complied with one or more of the terms or conditions in this Order.
19. The provisions of this Order are deemed severable, and, if a court of competent jurisdiction or other appropriate authority deems any provision of this Order unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall be valid and enforceable.
20. This Order shall terminate five years from its effective date or upon compliance with all the terms and conditions set forth in this Order, whichever is later.
21. The Chief Clerk shall provide a copy of this fully executed Order to each of the parties. By law, the effective date of this Order shall be the date the Order is final, as provided by 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 70.106(d) and TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.144.

S I G N A T U R E P A G E

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

For the Commission

Date

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



UNSWORN DECLARATION OF JESS S. ROBINSON

"On behalf of the Executive Director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the 'Executive Director's Preliminary Report and Petition Recommending that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Enter an Enforcement Order Assessing an Administrative Penalty Against and Requiring Certain Actions of SORT Valley LLC dba MiniMax 3' (the "EDPRP") was filed in the TCEQ Chief Clerk's office on November 3, 2022.

The EDPRP was mailed to Respondent's last known address on November 3, 2022, via certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid. According to the return receipt "green card," Respondent received notice of the EDPRP on November 5, 2022, as evidenced by the signature on the card.

More than 20 days have elapsed since Respondent received notice of the EDPRP. Respondent failed to file an answer and failed to request a hearing.

By letter dated December 27, 2022, sent via first class mail and certified mail, return receipt requested article no. 7019 0700 0000 9626 6892, I provided Respondent with notice of the TCEQ's intent to order the USTs at the Facility be shut down and removed from service if the violations pertaining to release detection and financial assurance were not corrected within 30 days of Respondent's receipt of the letter. The United States Postal Service returned the Notice sent by certified mail as "refused." The first class mail has not been returned.

As of the date of this declaration, I am not aware of any evidence that indicates that Respondent is now in compliance with the release detection and financial assurance violations noted during the March 8, 2022, investigation."

"My name is Jess S. Robinson, and I am an employee of the following governmental agency: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. I am executing this declaration as part of my assigned duties and responsibilities. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct."

Executed in Williamson County,
State of Texas,
on the 13th day of March, 2023

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jess Robinson".

Declarant