

Frequent Walk-Through Inspections

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Your fuel storage system equipment was most likely installed by a trained and certified installer. Proper installation and maintenance are critical to ensure longevity of this system, however daily wear and tear of the equipment is inevitable. That is why routine inspections are so important to your operation. You want to detect minor problems before they become serious financial strains to your business. You should not rely solely on the compliance inspection cycle to detect equipment problems.

The ultimate goal of an inspection is to eliminate petroleum releases to the environment. A minor, undetected leak will eventually become a “release” that requires corrective action. An overfill of a tank system with inadequate spill containment will result in a release. Leaks that go undetected because of inadequate leak detection systems become releases. Metal tank components that are not adequately cathodically protected will degrade and eventually leak. The average cost of corrective action of a release in Iowa is approximately \$80,000. If just four releases are eliminated per year, PMMIC’s inspection program pays for itself in reduced insurance claims. If you stop a leak at your facility before it becomes a release you can save deductible expenses of \$10,000 and a lot of headaches.

So what should you do? You should conduct basic walk-through inspections of your facility at least monthly to make sure that your essential equipment is working properly and that you have release response supplies on hand.

The walk-through inspection is not as thorough as a compliance inspection, but it can provide you with a quick overview of the operational status of your UST system on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. You might think of this level of inspection as sort of like the dashboard indicators you respond to in your automobiles that provide you with status warnings like “low battery.”

When you perform your walk-through inspection, you should quickly check at least the following:

- **Release Detection System:** Is your release detection equipment working properly? How do you know? Are you checking for water in your tanks? Do you fill out daily inventory records? Do you keep sufficient copies of passing ATG tests each month?
- **Spill Buckets:** Are spill buckets clean, empty, and in good shape? If you find water, do you dispose of it properly? Are you documenting that they are maintained properly?
- **Overfill Alarm or Emergency Shutoff:** Is your overfill alarm working and easily seen or heard? Does every employee know what to do in case of an alarm? Is the emergency shutoff fully operational? Do you require your jobber to document inventory levels before dropping fuel?

- **Impressed Current Cathodic Protection System (if you have one):** Is your cathodic protection system turned on 24 hours a day? Are you checking your rectifier at least every 60 days and keeping a written log of readings?
- **Fill and Monitoring Ports:** Are covers and caps tightly sealed and locked?
- **Spill and Overfill Response Supplies:** Do you have the appropriate supplies for cleaning up a spill or overfill?

In addition, good UST site management should also include the following quick visual checks:

- **Dispenser Hoses, Nozzles, and Breakaways:** Are they in good condition and working properly?
- **Dispenser and Dispenser Sumps:** Any signs of leaking? Are the sumps clean and empty?
- **Piping Sumps:** Any signs of leaking? Are the sumps clean and empty?

If you find any problems during the inspection, you or your UST contractor need to take action quickly to resolve these problems and avoid serious releases.

Every shift manager should be familiar with the components of your UST system and should know how to respond to an alarm or indication of a potential release.

A frequent walk-through checklist is available on our web page at <http://www.pmmicinsurance.com/en/forms/iowa.cfm>.