Dispenser Filters

Everyone knows that the oil/fuel filters on your car or truck should be changed regularly. You do this because you want your vehicle to last longer and continue to operate properly. The same goes for the filters in your fuel dispensers.

Filters are an important part of the UST dispensing system, and need to be changed regularly to maintain proper operation. A helpful hint to manage your filter changes is to write the date you changed the filter in a visible spot with a permanent marker. When the date is marked, it is easier to determine when the filter needs to be changed again.

It is recommended that filters be changed at least once a year for normal fuel output facilities. Higher volume facilities may need to change filters more frequently. Other factors that dictate how often the filters are changed include quality of fuel passing through the delivery system and the presence of water in the system.

Choosing the correct filter for the fuel system will also determine the life of the filter. Filter material is measured in microns. Filters with a larger micron rating allow larger particles through the system. Usually, a 10-micron filter is used for unleaded gasoline, and a 30-micron filter is used for diesel fuel. A 30-micron filter used in an unleaded dispenser unit can allow unwanted particles to pass through to the customer's vehicle. Likewise, a 10-micron filter used in a diesel dispenser will become plugged more quickly because of the consistency of diesel fuel.

Obviously, the fuel filter is designed to catch debris, bacteria and water that flow through the delivery system. As the system operates, and these items continue to build up, your filters become clogged. Clogged filters cause slow product flow, and slow product flow causes unhappy customers. Also, clogged filters can be hard on your system. This can cause the pump to "starve" or cause backpressure, depending on the type of delivery system you have. Older suction pumps generally struggle to keep adequate flow rate anyway, so you should avoid any unnecessary restrictions. Removing the filters is not the answer. Without the filters, all of the debris and water that was in the tank is now passed through the system and in to your customer's vehicle. This too will cause unhappy customers.

Clogged filters need to be changed. When doing this, it is important to have the system disabled to avoid a fuel spill. Proper steps should be taken to assure that no fuel is lost. Fuel pans that fit below the dispensers in a combination with fuel absorbent pads can help keep the fuel spillage to a minimum. Fuel that is lost below dispensers without containment goes directly into the environment, and this can add up over the life of a site. Dispensers that are equipped with secondary containment should have the same steps taken. Containment was designed to catch spilled fuel, but not store fuel for any amount of time. If spillage occurs, the fuel should be removed immediately.

When filters are changed, they should be monitored to assure that there is a tight seal. Leaks can occur when the filter is not securely tightened. The filters can vibrate lose with operation and cause a severe leak under the dispenser. In addition to a leaking seal, tiny holes can develop through rust spots. **Routine dispenser checks are a must!**

Changing filters assures that the highest quality and quantity of fuel is dispensed to the customer.