



December 27, 2017

To Underground Storage Tank (UST) Testers and Other Interested Persons:

RE: GUIDANCE AND NOTIFICATION FOR TESTING UST SPILL CONTAINMENT STRUCTURES WITH WATER VERSUS FUEL IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

At the inception of the requirements for hydrostatic testing of UST spill containment in California, the primary test fluid of choice tended to be consistent with the UST storage contents (gasoline, diesel, etc). Over time this practice has changed primarily due to safety concerns, and water with a small amount of added soap to reduce surface tension is now the most widely used test fluid.

Use of fuel as a test fluid may pose a fire and safety hazard to employees, customers and the general public as gasoline vapors are flammable and can explode if exposed to an ignition source such as a spark or open flame. Additionally, use of fuel may increase the probability of an unauthorized release in the event of spill bucket/containment failure. This is especially true when testing direct-bury spill buckets.

Given the safety and environmental concerns surrounding the use of fuel as a test fluid and the practical availability of safer alternatives, the County of Santa Barbara will no longer accept spill containment test results performed with fuel. This notification will become effective January 1, 2018.

Additional information on recommended practices for containment testing can be found on the California State Water Resources Control Board document LG-166 and the Petroleum Equipment Institute Guidance Document RP-1200-12.

If you have questions regarding this document, or require assistance, please contact either of the Environmental Health Services offices listed above.

Sincerely,

Erin K. O'Connell, P.G., C.E.G  
Hazardous Materials Supervisor  
County of Santa Barbara CUPA