

UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS

Guidance for Tank Owners, Operators and Service Providers

Following an earthquake it is important to examine all underground storage tank (UST) systems for damage. A damaged or improperly operating UST system can pose a significant risk to human health, safety and the environment. While it is important to assess all UST systems for damage, older systems with single wall piping and fiberglass tanks may be particularly susceptible to damage from an earthquake. Below is the list of steps you should take to assess UST systems for damage in the event of an earthquake.

If you find that any of the following situations exist, do not operate the system.

1. Walk around the tank and look for obvious signs of damage.	1) Walk around the site and look for obvious signs that a tank system is compromised. Call your service provider for a more thorough examination and any needed repairs. If you smell gasoline you should immediately close the site, block it off to traffic and turn off the electricity to the system. Do not try to locate the leak. Instead, they contact the local fire department or your service provider. If you don't find obvious signs of compromise, examine all tank system access points.
2. Are any of the components in alarm mode?	2) If you have an automatic tank gauge or alarm system (Veeder Root, Ronan, Ustman or a similar system) check to see if any of the system components are in an alarm mode. Perform an alarm check to confirm that the alarms are working and run an inventory check to determine if there are any unusual results.
3. Look in the sump and check for product and/or product odors.	3) Look in the sump; if it contains product or if there is a strong smell of product, immediately discontinue use of the system, turn off the electricity and notify the fire department. If you have a steel manhole cover and ring, do not replace the cover as this may create sparks. Block off the area, and notify your service provider. Do not try to pump the product out of the sump.
4. Check for damage under the dispensers.	4) Remove the covers on your dispensers. Look for any indication of product under the pumps or in the sumps. If you find free product, see leaking seals, or notice an unusual smell, do not use the systems. Turn off the electricity and immediately notify the fire department and your service provider. Do not allow access to the pump island by persons or vehicles.
5. Examine spill buckets for damage.	5) Spill bucket covers should be removed and the spill buckets examined for distortion to determine if the seal between the bucket and the drop tube, or the bucket and the surrounding pavement have been affected. If you find distortion or product in the spill buckets, do not operate the system. Manway covers should be examined for distortion of the ring. If you can, remove the cover and examine the rubber seal between the ring and the cover for any damage.
6. Do not operate tanks if there is damage or leaks in the system.	

If you have completed all of the above and do not find any signs of leaks or broken equipment, attempt to operate each of your dispensers in turn. If the dispensers do not operate, or operate slowly or erratically, call your service provider to check the system. (Failure of the dispensers to operate can indicate a leak in the piping. Continuing to operate them can cause harm to your system).

If you have performed all of the above checks and are confident that your system is functional, we recommend that you have tightness tests performed on your lines and tanks as soon as possible after an earthquake. This is especially important if you have an older system, or if you are using single wall piping or fiberglass tanks.