

GUIDELINES FOR ADOPTION OF CALIFORNIA UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK REGULATIONS

*For Use by Unidocs Member Agencies or where approved by your Local Jurisdiction
Authority Cited: Title 23, Division 3, Chapter 16 California Code of Regulations;
Chapter 6.7 Health and Safety Code; California Fire Code*

These guidelines are applicable to hazardous materials underground tank systems regulated by all jurisdictions within the boundaries of the County of Santa Clara. This includes facilities in both incorporated and unincorporated areas.

A. Background

Santa Clara County has over 10 years of experience dealing with installation, removal, and leak detection monitoring of underground storage tank systems. Local ordinances were established in 1983 to deal with these issues as contamination from leaking underground storage tank systems was discovered throughout the county. This contamination adversely impacted groundwater and drinking water supplies. On January 1, 1984, the State of California adopted its first underground storage tank regulations based on much of the work performed in Santa Clara County.

B. Findings of Fact

Due to the following specialized conditions within Santa Clara County, some requirements (the "Amendments to Regulations" described below) more stringent than the current Federal statute and State regulations shall be enforced:

- All groundwater resources in Santa Clara County are designated as having "actual or potential beneficial uses" by the Santa Clara Valley Water District;
- Domestic and industrial users in Santa Clara County obtain approximately 50% of their water from groundwater wells;
- Agricultural users in Santa Clara County obtain all of their water from groundwater wells;
- There are currently 1302 active fuel contamination sites and 559 active solvent contamination sites in Santa Clara County;
- There are currently 35 Superfund (National Priority List) sites in Santa Clara County relating to leaking underground storage tank or vault systems.

C. Amendments to Regulations

The California Underground Storage Tank Regulations shall be enforced throughout the County of Santa Clara with the following amendments:

Amendment No. 1

- (1) Regulations regarding installation and closure of underground storage tank systems shall equally apply to sumps containing hazardous substances.
- (2) Regulations regarding installation, closure, and leak detection monitoring of underground storage tank systems shall equally apply to farm tanks.

Reason for Requirement: These tanks have been documented throughout the County as being just as susceptible to leaks and groundwater contamination as the more traditional type of underground tank. There is no scientific reason to exempt such tanks.

Amendment No. 2

New installations or upgrades of underground storage tank systems using suction pumps/piping shall be regulated as pressurized pumps/piping. Applicable installation, closure, and leak detection monitoring requirements described in statute and regulation for pressurized pumps/piping shall equally apply to suction systems.

Reason for Requirement: Suction tank systems have been documented throughout the County as being susceptible to leaks and groundwater contamination. The argument that leaking suction systems are not a threat to groundwater, because it is impossible to pump product through them, has not been validated through our experience. Instead, we have observed that facilities will attempt to “prime” their suction pumps as long as necessary to be able to pump product. Eventually, they can be successful at getting product to pump out, even though a leak may exist.