

After A Flood, What Should Owners And Operators Do?

After a flood, regional and state UST program representatives may receive calls from UST owners and operators with questions concerning problems with tank systems; or affected parties may call the National Response Center (NRC), the federal government's sole point of contact for reporting all hazardous substance and oil spills. The following practices may help owners and operators quickly and safely restart UST systems and bring them back into service.



*Flood of 1977
Matewan/Tug Valley, West Virginia*

If the UST has been in a flood, depending on the site-specific situation, owners and operators may take the following actions after the water has receded and local officials allow for re-entry:

- **Make sure the power is off** to any UST-related equipment (such as power to the dispensers, pumps, release detection equipment, and other devices).
- **Determine if product** leaked from the UST.
- **Determine if water or debris** entered the UST.
- **After inspecting the electrical system, return power** to the UST system.
- **Check release detection system** for proper operation. Perform release detection again, as soon as possible after the flood.
- **Check all equipment** including pumps, shear valves, fill pipes, and vent lines for proper operation.
- **Clean and empty spill buckets and sumps**, including those under the dispensers and above the tanks. Inspect the piping and fittings for damage and possible leaks.
- **Perform an UST system tightness test** to ensure integrity prior to adding product.
- **Test spill buckets and sumps** to ensure they are tight.
- **Test cathodic protection** to ensure it is operating properly.

For information and checklists about USTs and floods from API, Delaware, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, and Washington, see Appendices A and B.

What If A Tank Floats Out Of Its Excavation?

The tank may float out of its original backfill site if not adequately anchored. If this occurs, the following actions may be appropriate:

- **Notify the appropriate authorities** according to applicable policies, if there is any evidence of spilled product.
- **Notify** the local fire department.
- **Turn off any power in the vicinity of the tanks and piping**, and immediately call the electric company if any power lines are down in the area.
- **Rope off the area and keep people away** from the affected area.
- **Remove all contents** of the tank.
- **Perform initial leak mitigation and release reporting**, if necessary.
- **Obtain a contractor to dismantle any piping and/or dispensers**, and remove the piping and tank properly.

Remind tank owners and operators to follow established state program environmental compliance guidelines for emergency response, cleanup, tank removal, waste disposal, and reinstallation.



Tank floating out of ground, Rockaway River, NJ



Iowa flood of 2008