



State Fire Marshal Division

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REMOVAL OR ABANDONMENT INFORMATION SHEET

SECTION 1 — REMOVAL OR ABANDONMENT OF UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS

Underground tanks containing flammable or combustible liquids that have been removed from service for one year are considered abandoned. For the purposes of this policy, heating oil tanks are included. All underground tanks that are abandoned must be removed from the ground or abandoned in place in accordance with this policy. Code requirements can be found in the 2007 Minnesota State Fire Code [Here after referred to as MSFC (07).] Section 3404.2.13.

Tank installations that are already equipped with an operational electronic leak detection monitoring system are considered to still be in service for up to 5 years since the tank was last used. Even with electronic leak detection, tanks that have been removed from service (last used) for a period greater than 5 years will require abandonment in place or removal according to this policy.

Tanks that are found to be leaking shall be promptly emptied, repaired and returned to service, abandoned or removed per this policy. [MSFC (07), Section 3404.2.7.10.1]

MPCA has the authority to order tanks removed that are found to be leaking. All such reports shall be referred to the MPCA.

1.1 Removing tanks from the ground

Minnesota State Fire Code (07) Section 3404.2.13.1.3 requires underground tanks that have been out of service for a period of 1 year or more to be removed from the ground or abandoned in place. Removal of underground tanks shall be in accordance with the following [MSFC (07) Section 3404.2.14.1]:

1. Flammable and combustible liquids shall be removed from the tank and connected piping.
2. Piping at tank openings which is not used further shall be disconnected.

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3. Piping shall be removed from the ground.
Exception: Piping is allowed to be abandoned in place where the fire code official determines that removal is not practical. Abandoned piping shall be capped and safeguarded as required by the code official.
4. Tank openings shall be capped or plugged, leaving a 1/8" to 1/4" diameter opening for pressure equalization.
5. Tanks shall be purged of vapor and made inert prior to removal.
6. All exterior above-grade fill and vent piping shall be permanently removed.
Exception: Piping associated with bulk plants, terminal facilities and refineries.

Disposal. Tanks shall be disposed of in accordance with federal, state and local regulations. [MSFC (07) Section 3404.2.14.2]

1.2 Abandonment in place

Tanks abandoned in place shall be safeguarded in the following manner [MSFC (07) Section 3404.2.13.1.4]:

1. Flammable or combustible liquids shall be removed from the tank and connected piping.
2. The suction, inlet, gauge, vapor return and vapor lines shall be disconnected.
3. The tank shall be filled completely with an approved inert material. Acceptable materials include cement slurry and polyurethane foam (sand or water are not satisfactory materials).
Exception: Residential heating oil tanks of 1,100 gallon capacity or less need not be filled with an inert material provided that the fill line is permanently capped or plugged below grade to prevent refilling of the tank.
4. Remaining underground piping shall be capped or plugged.
5. A record of tank size, location and date of abandonment shall be retained. In addition, the property owner is also responsible for notifying the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and local officials (when required) as to the presence of the abandoned tank.

SECTION 2 – ABOVEGROUND STORAGE TANK REMOVAL

2.1 Tanks used for private dispensing

Any rule of the Commissioner of Public Safety pertaining to the decommissioning of above ground tanks used for private dispensing is superseded by MPCA rules. All questions about above ground tanks used for private dispensing shall be referred to the MPCA. [Minn. Rules 7151.]

2.2 Aboveground tanks temporarily out of service (less than 90 days)

MSFC (07) Section 3404.2.13.2 details the requirements of aboveground storage tanks that are temporarily out of service (less than 90 days). Storage tanks that are out of service for less than 90 days are required to have all connecting lines isolated from the tank and be secured against tampering (MSFC (07) Section 3404.2.13.2.1).

2.2 Aboveground tanks out of service for 90 days but less than 1 year

Aboveground storage tanks not used for a period of 90 days, but less than 1 year, shall be safeguarded in accordance with MSFC (07) Section 3404.2.13.1.2 or removed in accordance

with MSFC (07) Section 3404.2.14.

The requirements are as follows:

1. Flammable or combustible liquids shall be removed from the tank.
2. All piping, including fill line, gauge opening, vapor return and pump connection, shall be capped or plugged and secured from tampering.
3. Vent lines shall remain open and maintained in accordance with MSFC (07) Sections 3404.2.7.3 and 3404.2.7.4.

Exceptions:

1. Tanks and containers connected to oil burners that are not in use during warm seasons of the year or are used as a backup heating system to gas.
2. In-place, active fire protection (foam) system lines.

2.4 Aboveground tanks out of service for 1 year or more

Aboveground tanks that have been out of service for a period of 1 year or more shall be removed in accordance with MSFC (07) Section 3404.2.14.

Abandonment is not an option for aboveground storage tanks that are out of service for 1 year or more.

SECTION 3 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3.1 Additional information

The State Fire Marshal Division does not maintain records of installed, removed or abandoned tanks in the State of Minnesota. It is not necessary to apply for a permit or report tank removal or abandonment to the State Fire Marshal Division.

The local fire official (fire marshal or fire chief) must, however, be notified before a tank removal or abandonment is started. As stated above in Section 1.1 and 2.4, the State Fire Marshal requires tank removal, although abandonment is an option in some circumstances. Once approval from the local fire chief for tank removal or abandonment is received, it is not necessary to contact or receive approval from the State Fire Marshal Division.

The State Fire Marshal Division does not license or certify underground tank contractors. Contact the MPCA for a listing of certified underground storage tank contractors permitted to conduct tank removals. State Fire Marshal Division Inspectors do not witness or inspect underground tank removal or abandonment work.

MPCA rules may apply to some abandoned tanks. Contact MPCA underground storage tank registration for additional information.

Any questions related to this issue should be directed to the Code Specialist with the State Fire Marshal Division at (651) 201-7200 or you can e-mail questions to firecode@state.mn.us.