Notice to Underground Storage Tank Owners, Operators, and Contractors

March 25, 2020

This notice serves as guidance to underground storage tank (UST) owners/operators and contractors regarding UST system operation, repairs, retrofits, and closures during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

To ensure that we follow the County of Santa Clara Health Officer order that went into effect on March 17, 2020 which limits activity, travel, and business functions to only the most essential needs, and the Executive order issued by the Governor of California on March 19, 2020 directing all persons to stay home except for essential needs, we have implemented the following regarding UST system operation, repairs, retrofits, and closures.

**Compliance:**

UST systems are required to be operated and maintained in compliance with California UST Regulations in order to protect the safety of the public and the environment. Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health (DEH) recognizes the hardships due to this emergency and understands that circumstances out of the owner/operator’s control, such as the potential unavailability of Designated UST Operators and UST Service Technicians, may make it impossible to remain entirely in compliance with all requirements. We will evaluate compliance and weigh enforcement decisions consistent with guidance provided by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) on March 19, 2020, which is available [here](#). It is important that owners/operators follow the SWRCB’s guidance and keep DEH informed regarding issues preventing compliance by emailing updates to their inspector or to USTinspector@deh.sccgov.org.

**UST Installation / Retrofitting / Repair / Closure Projects:**

**Plan Checks / Permit Reviews:**

UST installation, retrofitting, repair, and closure work requires a permit from DEH. Our office is not open to accept plan submittals at the counter, via mail, or by courier. Our staff is working remotely, so all Hazardous Materials Construction Permits and UST Closure Permit Applications and required attachments must be submitted in PDF format via email to ustinspector@deh.sccgov.org. The email should include billing contact information. An invoice will be emailed to the billing contact and payment may be made online. While plan check reviews will continue, we regret that review turnaround times may increase due to our office being closed. As always, ensuring that application packages have been signed and contain all required information will help expedite review and approval.
For any project that is NOT necessary to maintain or gain compliance with California UST regulations or other Federal, State or local requirements, please include with your plan check submittal a brief written statement specifically identifying how the work qualifies as an “essential activity” as defined by the County Health Officer’s emergency order, which is available [here](#).

**Inspections:**

To schedule a required inspection, contact the inspector identified in the plan check approval letter via email. Given the current state of emergency, we request as much advance notice as possible and cannot guarantee short turnaround times.

When performing their work, contractors and UST Service Technicians, must at all times, as reasonably possible maintain social distancing of at least six feet from any other person.

Additional information regarding the emergency orders issued by the Health Officer and Governor is available [here](#).

We appreciate your understanding and patience and hope that you, your coworkers, family members, friends, and clients remain healthy and safe during these trying times.