



## **During COVID-19: What to Expect from a UST Compliance Inspection**

To ensure public health and environmental protection, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) is conducting compliance inspections at permitted facilities. To protect all entities involved, SCDHEC UST Management Division has modified the inspection process and protocols to help minimize the spread of COVID-19. It is critical that everyone practice social distancing and follow guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) during this time.

Protecting all entities while onsite is the number one focus in planning for and conducting these inspections. This modified compliance inspection approach aims to minimize exposure through using technology and other methods. Expect SCDHEC employees to practice social distancing at all times. Inspectors will follow, and encourage tank owner/operators to follow, CDC, OSHA and FEMA guidance.

CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>.

FEMA: <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2020/04/22/coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-addressing-ppe-needs-non-healthcare-setting#>

OSHA: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

SCDHEC: [COVID-19 Re-Opening Guidance for Businesses](#)

### **Opening Conference**

- Inspectors will contact the owner/operator to schedule an inspection in advance.
- The owner/operator will be instructed to provide access to all equipment.
- At this time, owners/operators will be encouraged to send in paperwork electronically to the inspector and central office. (see details in Records Review section)
- SCDHEC requests that facility personnel provide the inspector adequate space for social distancing during the inspection.

### **Onsite Modifications**

The logistics of the inspection will be discussed during the opening conference. Depending on the facility, changes may be necessary to practice social distancing and limit the amount of time at the site and inside the facility.

- Upon arrival, the inspector will contact the facility by phone to let them know they have arrived.

- If the inspector needs to review equipment (e.g., ATG console, Rectifier box, etc.) that is located in an area where social distancing cannot be maintained, the inspector will request that the facility representative use real time messaging platform (e.g. Face-time or similar capabilities) or send picture(s) via E-mail.
- Other onsite modifications may include:
  - Inspector walking the site alone, if possible and safe to do so.
  - Texting questions instead of having a side by side conversation; or
  - Inspector/operator taking turns at entering a space or viewing pieces of equipment.

Tank top equipment inspection: *Inspectors will still require an onsite facility representative to remove tank top lids and covers to provide access to applicable equipment for inspection purposes.*

- After notification of arrival, the facility representative should set up safety devices, If the representative is not able to set up adequate safety equipment, the SCDHEC inspector will set up safety devices to provide a safe work area and to enhance social distancing from customers and facility representative.
- Once the safety equipment is in place, the inspector will ask the facility representative to open the tank top equipment and remind the facility representative to oblige SCDHEC's request to maintain social distance from the inspector. The inspector will step back as the facility representative opens and closes the lids.
- After tank top equipment has been inspected, the inspector will coordinate with the facility representative for movement of the safety equipment.

Dispensers: *Inspectors will still require an onsite facility representative to remove dispenser covers to allow access for visual inspection.*

- The facility representative will determine how many dispensers may be open at any time. The inspector will coordinate the setup of safety equipment with the facility representative.
- The inspection will begin at one end of the dispenser canopy, with access to the first dispenser. When the inspector indicates they are ready to inspect, the facility representative will step away.
- While the inspector is finishing up the current dispenser inspection, the facility representative can begin opening the next dispenser.
- As the inspector finishes evaluating each dispenser, the facility representative will follow behind to close the equipment. The inspector will move to the next opened dispenser. This pattern will allow the inspector and facility representative to alternate while maintaining social distancing and abiding by public safety protocol.
- This process will continue until all dispensers have been inspected and secured.

Records Review: *Paperwork includes, but is not limited to the following: Release detection records for tanks and piping, equipment testing results, equipment repair records, cathodic protection results (if applicable), A/B Operator logs, and any new activities required to be completed by May 26, 2020 such as: annual release detection operability checks, periodic spill bucket and overflow prevention testing/checks, etc.*

- Paperwork should be provided to the inspector and central office ([owensd@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:owensd@dhec.sc.gov) and [evansch@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:evansch@dhec.sc.gov)) electronically or by U.S. Mail prior to the inspection. If records have not been provided prior to the inspection, the inspector will work with the facility representative to determine the best method for reviewing paperwork safely.
- Once the inspector has completed reviewing all paperwork, the facility representative will be notified and can retrieve the paperwork (if necessary) in a safe manner agreed upon by both parties.

### **Closing Conference**

The inspector will call the facility to inform them that the inspection is completed and discuss the results of the inspection.

- If there are no violations noted during the inspection, an “In Compliance” letter will be issued as normal.
- If violations are noted during the inspection, a Notice of Alleged Violation (NOAV) can be printed on-site by the inspector. This NOAV will be given to the facility representative for signature in a manner agreed upon by both parties. After the signature has been obtained, the inspector will photograph the signature page and leave the paper copy with the facility representative.
- If violations are noted during the inspection and the inspector does not have the capabilities to print the NOAV, a signature document will need to be completed by the facility representative. After the signature has been obtained, the inspector will take a photograph of the signature document with his/her tablet and leave the paper copy with the facility representative.
- Inspection results will be sent to the owner/operator via E-mail. Inspection results can be sent via U.S. Mail, if requested by the owner/operator.