

Underground Storage Tank Operator Training

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The Energy Policy Act of 2005 requires the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in coordination with states, to develop training guidelines for three distinct classes of individuals who operate and maintain federally-regulated underground storage tank systems (USTs). UST system operators include but are not limited to local, county and state units of government, private fuel facilities such as trucking firms, retail marketers of fuel products; those that operate systems supplying back up fuel for emergency generators or heating plants such as hospitals or utilities; and those that store and use chemicals or have tanks for waste oil collection. States receiving federal funding for regulating these systems must develop state-specific training requirements consistent with EPA's guidelines.

By January 1, 2012 for large businesses or entities and by August 8, 2012 for small operations, owners of UST systems must name certified Class A, B and C operators for each of their facilities. The designated operators may be owners, employees or contractors. Class A operators are individuals who have primary responsibility to operate and maintain a system, focusing on the broader aspects of the statutory requirements and standards necessary to properly operate and maintain a system. Class B operators are the actual persons who implement day-to-day operations of UST systems and Class C operators are on-site employees who are the first line of response to alarms and to events indicating emergency situations.

The Department of Commerce has promulgated rules for this training and testing that became effective August 1, 2009. The Petroleum Products and Tanks Bureau has completed evaluation of training programs for the three classes of operators. Training and testing opportunities are now available for Class A and B tank systems operators. These approved training and testing methods are posted on the Commerce website (see below).

The state, in conjunction with the International Code Council (ICC), has developed Wisconsin specific operator tests. The Wisconsin tests are being administered by Pearson Vue, a national testing company with test center locations in the state. There are two tests available, one for Class A operator only and one for Class B operator. If an owner or operator wishes to be certified as both Class A and B, it is only necessary to take the Class B test. Those successfully completing the Class B test which has questions relating to both operator classes will automatically be considered as having sufficient knowledge of both Class A and B responsibilities. You can access Pearson Vue at <http://www.pearsonvue.com>, there is a \$75 fee for taking the test. The test is available after August 1, 2010.

Grants are available through the Wisconsin Department of Commerce to help offset the cost of training and examinations required for persons who must be certified to operate federally regulated underground storage tanks. The grant can be used to pay the full Wisconsin ICC test fee or can be applied as partial payment toward the cost of tuition for a state approved Class A, Class B or Class A/B training and testing course (private training vendor fees vary). Only one grant will be awarded per person to Wisconsin tank operators on a first come basis, subject to available funds. Commerce will give priority to small business owners, civic organizations or government agencies. Operators for large businesses will also be considered for grants, depending on funding availability. (Note: Section 227.114 (1) Wis Stats, reads in part: “ ‘Small business’ means a business entity, including its affiliates, which is independently owned and operated and not dominant in its field, and which employs 25 or fewer full-time employees or which has gross annual sales of less than \$5,000,000.” **The application period ends June 30, 2011 and the scholarship must be used by Aug 31, 2011.** A tank operator who wishes to submit an application for a grant must apply online at: <http://doa.wi.gov/WEBSurveys/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=18KK5170>. After receiving a grant, the applicant will receive a code specific to the training course or test selected to use for payment of fees when registering for the course. The grant program begins August 1, 2010.

The bureau has produced a brochure to distribute to tank system operators explaining the requirements, responsibilities and training elements for each class of operator. To view the brochure, question / answer page and list of approved testing and training vendors visit our operator training website at: http://commerce.wi.gov/ER/ER-BST-FedRegUST_OperatorTraining.html