



Secured and ready to be removed off site with the appropriate signage

Concrete slabs removed and fuel tanks exposed



Fuel tanks being lifted out

Underground Fuel Tank Removal

Underground Fuel Tank Removal is a necessary requirement, especially when the tanks reach the end of their useful life. Whilst they can be relined internally to prolong the asset utilisation. Were possible, removal and replacement with an above ground tank is a much better option. Underground tanks tend to leak and cause major environmental issues. Also, with an above ground system most of the piping and utilities are above ground and can be serviced easily if required (for preventative or ad-hoc maintenance).

Whilst the removal of underground fuel tanks isn't an intense construction activity. The processes, standards, safety and environmental issues are critical and can result in major issues if risks eventuate. Fuel tank removal is governed by the Australian Standard AS4976, among many other codes of practice, Australian Standards and Legislation. We have listed some further reading and reference material when considering fuel tank removal below. As a very basic overview, it is very important to consider the removal of existing liquids in the tanks, the validation of the area and undertaking all the necessary testing and notifying WorkCover.

Removal is not the only method of decommissioning a fuel tank. They can be abandoned in place by filling them in with foam, concrete slurry or sand.

Further Reading and Reference Material

Links were current at time of publication

AS 1997, AS1674.1–1997: *Safety in welding and allied processes – Fire precautions*, Standards Australia, Sydney; available at www.standards.org.au

AS 2004, AS1940–2004: *Storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids*, Standards Australia, Sydney; available at www.standards.org.au

AS 2006, AS1692–2006: *Steel tanks for flammable and combustible liquids*, Standards Australia, Sydney; available at www.standards.org.au

AS 2008, AS4976–2008: *Removal and disposal of underground petroleum storage tanks*, Standards Australia, Sydney; available at www.standards.org.au

DECC 2007, *Environmental action for service stations*, Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW, Sydney – Guide to assist operators of service stations understand the environmental risks of their operations and improve environmental management; available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/service.htm

DECCW 2009a, *Guidelines for implementing the POEO (Underground Petroleum Storage Systems) Regulation 2008*, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW, Sydney; available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/clm/upssguidelines.htm

DECCW 2009b, *Planning and development process for sites with underground petroleum storage systems*, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW, Sydney; available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/clm/upssguidelines.htm

DECCW 2010, *UPSS Technical Note: Site validation reporting*, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW, Sydney; available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/clm/upssguidelines.htm

DUAP 1998a, *Managing Land Contamination: Planning guidelines SEPP 55 – Remediation of land*, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and Environment Protection Authority, Sydney; available at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/assessingdev/pdf/gu_contam.pdf

DUAP 1998b, *Applying SEPP 33: Hazardous and offensive development application guidelines*, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and Environment Protection Authority, Sydney; note a revised consultation draft is available at

www.planning.nsw.gov.au/PlansforAction/Majorhazards/PlanningGuidelinesforHazardousDevelopment/tabid/168/Default.aspx

NSW WorkCover Authority 2005, *Code of Practice: Storage and handling of dangerous goods*, Gosford; available at www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/OHS/DangerousGoods/Guides/Pages/default.aspx

NSW WorkCover Authority 2009, *Fact sheet 3_1: Dangerous goods – Abandoning disused underground tanks*, Gosford; available at

www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Publications/AlertsGuidesHazards/TransportAndStorage/abandoning_disused_underground_tanks_dangerous_goods_factsheet_5218.pdf

Protection of the Environment Operations (Underground Petroleum Storage Systems) Regulation 2008; available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/clm/upss.htm

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 – the principal planning legislation in NSW; available at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 – Clause 174ZF: Cleaning or decommissioning plant, equipment and containers; available at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/

State Environmental Planning Policy No. 33: Hazardous and offensive development; available at www.planning.nsw.gov.au

State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55: Remediation of land; available at www.planning.nsw.gov.au