

SPILL BUCKETS

A spill bucket is a liquid-tight container that surrounds the fill pipe. It is there to catch and contain any small leaks, drips, and spills from the delivery hose that may occur during the fuel delivery process. Small drips that occur when the hose is disconnected are common. Leaky hose connections are less common but can produce significant releases that spill buckets must be able to hold. Most spill buckets are below grade, but there are some that are located above grade as well. In Maine, spill buckets installed after April 5, 1986, must hold at least 3 gallons of liquid. Spill buckets installed after April 28, 2004, must be able to hold 15 gallons of liquid.

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Delivery hose hooked to the fill pipe in the spill bucket.



Below-grade spill bucket.



This spill bucket needs cleaning. Keeping spill buckets clean is a constant chore.

Above-grade spill buckets.



Photos courtesy of Marcel Moreau Associates, Portland Maine.

MAINTENANCE

It is **YOUR** job to keep spill buckets **CLEAN** and **DRY** at all times. Water and/or fuel sitting in spill buckets will damage the buckets over time, causing them to rot or rust out. Chipped spill-bucket lids allow water to enter the bucket, and cracks or holes in the bucket itself allow fuel to leak out. Damaged lids or buckets must be replaced. During tank removals, contamination is often found around spill buckets that were defective and not replaced in a timely manner.

To maintain your spill buckets you must:

- Check your spill buckets after each delivery. Keep them free of oil, water, and debris.
 - Fuel in a clean bucket can be returned to the tank.
 - Dirty fuel or fuel and water mixtures must be treated as **hazardous waste** and disposed of properly.



Courtesy of Marcel Moreau Associates, Portland Maine.

- Check your spill buckets after rainstorms.
 - Water in the spill bucket must be treated as **hazardous waste** and disposed of properly. Contact your UST service provider for help in properly disposing of this water. Also, if water in the spill bucket is a frequent problem, consult with the UST service provider about what can be done to prevent this problem.

Water in spill buckets is most often contaminated and must be disposed of properly. Contact your UST service provider to be sure it is done properly.

PROBLEMS WITH SPILL BUCKETS


Tank owners/operators tend to overlook spill buckets. In fact, most operators don't know they have a leaky spill bucket until they have a cleanup on their hands. Given their exposure to weather extremes, spill buckets have relatively short lives—often less than 10 years. Once they are no longer liquid tight, they are no good. It is essential that you pay attention to the condition of your spill bucket. Be aware of the following potential problems:

- Chips in the lid that allow water to enter the bucket
- Accumulation of water as well as product (either can get you a citation from a regulator)
- Drain valve malfunctioning or broken

NOTE: With the prevalence of ethanol in fuels, drain valves can allow water into your tank, causing the alcohol to separate out of the gas, which can cause a pile of trouble in your customers' cars. If you have drain valves, it is a good idea to ask your service technician to replace them with liquid-tight plugs.

- Cracks or holes in the spill-bucket walls. Not all cracks and holes in spill buckets are obvious. If you have any doubt about the tightness of your spill buckets, have a qualified service technician test them for leaks.

If you do have to replace a spill bucket, consider installing a double-walled version. They are more expensive to buy, but the inner bucket can be replaced without breaking concrete, which will save you lots of money down the road. Also, you can easily tell if the spill bucket is leaking by checking the space between the two walls of the spill bucket.



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