



News Release

Washington Department of Ecology news
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Ecology adopts changes to improve underground storage tank safety

OLYMPIA – The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) has adopted changes to the state’s rule for preventing leaks from underground storage tank systems containing petroleum and other hazardous substances.

The Legislature directed Ecology to revise the rule to implement changes to the state’s compliance program required by state and federal laws. The program addresses the serious threat that leaking systems pose to human health and the environment. Leaks from underground storage tank systems can contaminate groundwater, the source of drinking water for 60 percent of Washington’s residents.

Ecology currently regulates more than 9,500 systems at more than 3,600 facilities throughout the state. A majority of the systems are located at gas stations. Others are owned and operated by other businesses and by local, state and federal governments.

Each year, about 50 new releases are confirmed at regulated facilities. The rule changes – which take effect Oct. 1, 2012 – will help to reduce the number and severity of those releases. The rule changes:

- Authorize Ecology to stop regulated substances from being delivered to systems that don’t comply with regulatory requirements.
- Require training for people who operate and maintain systems. Operators must be trained by Dec. 31, 2012.
- Require secondary containment of new tanks and pipes.
- Require containment under new dispenser systems.

Ecology held a public comment period in the spring. The agency hosted public hearings in April in Spokane, Yakima, Bellevue, and Lacey.

Documents related to the rule are posted on [the Toxics Cleanup Program’s website](#).

This action is exempt from Gov. Chris Gregoire’s executive order that suspends non-critical rule work. The adopted rule amendments are needed to maintain Ecology’s federally delegated underground storage tank program and to continue to receive federal funding for the work.

[See more information](#) about the rule suspension on Ecology’s website.

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Media Contact: Seth Preston, Ecology communications manager, 360-407-6848; 360-584-5744 cell; seth.preston@ecy.wa.gov

Read more about the rule: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/regs/ust/2012/rule-making.html>

Ecology's website: www.ecy.wa.gov

Ecology's social media: www.ecy.wa.gov/about/newmedia.html

Broadcast version

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To learn more about the compliance program and the rule change, go to Ecology's website at www.ecy.wa.gov and find the Toxics Cleanup Program.

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