



1 Introduction

- 1.1 This specification details the safety measures that must be taken when a petrol filling station ceases to operate on a temporary basis.
- 1.2 The specification also details the alternative methods of temporarily decommissioning a storage tank for the purposes of cleaning, modifications or redevelopment work etc.
- 1.3 It is the policy of the West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (Licensing Authority) that storage tanks falling into disuse must be decommissioned either permanently or temporarily depending on the future use and condition of the tank. Where it is the intention of the occupier or owner to reinstate the tank for the storage of petrol, it may be acceptable to temporarily decommission the tank for a period of up to 12 months. Any proposal to temporarily decommission a petrol tank should first be discussed and agreed with the Licensing Authority.

2 Contractors

- 2.1 Contractors are expected to use safe working practices when carrying out decommissioning work at petrol filling stations. Guidance regarding model work procedures and safety method statements can be found in the I P Publication 'Code of Practice for Contractors Working on Petrol Filling Stations'¹.
- 2.2 Contractors should only undertake the decommissioning work with the prior authorisation of the site operator or his appointed agent who by law has responsibility to control the activities of contractors working on the site. Guidance for site operators in fulfilling their legal obligations can be found in the IP publication Code of Practice for Retailers Managing Contractors Working on Petrol Filling Stations².

3 Removal of product

- 3.1 If it is necessary to first remove the petroleum spirit stored or remaining in the tank, the contractor nominated to perform the uplift operation should comply with the procedures detailed in the IP publication 'Guidelines for the Uplift of Product from Petrol Filling Stations and Customer Tanks'³.
- 3.2 Alternatively the contractor may follow any other recognised uplift procedure provided a method statement is submitted to the Licensing Authority prior to the commencement of the operation.

Note: *The consent of the Licensing Authority must be obtained before petroleum-spirit is uplifted from any licensed storage tank.*

Except in an emergency situation (i.e., a known or suspected leaking tank) at least 48 hrs notice must be given to the Licensing Authority of the intention to uplift product.

¹ IP Publication 'Code of Practice for Contractors Working on Petrol Filling Stations' (ISBN 0 85293 1948)

² IP Publication 'Code of Practice for Retailers Managing Contractors Working on Petrol Filling Stations' (ISBN 0 85293 240 5)

³ IP Publication 'Guidelines for the Uplift of Product from Petrol Filling Stations and Customer Tanks' (ISBN 0 85293 146 8)

4 Rendering the tank(s) temporarily safe

4.1 The following are acceptable methods of rendering a tank(s) temporarily safe.

a. Water Fill Method

- i. Residual petrol should be removed from the tank or compartments.
- ii. All pipe work except the vent pipe work connected to the tank should be drained and then disconnected in the manway chamber of the tank.
- iii. The tank should be filled with water to a level where clear water appears but does not overflow at the disconnected pipe work openings.
- iv. All disconnected pipe work should be effectively sealed in the manway chamber and the filling/dipping pipe should be kept securely locked.
- v. Offset fillpipes should be adequately secured against unauthorised access or vandalism or inadvertent use if other tanks remain in use. In the latter case the fillpoint connection should bear an appropriate warning notice and should be sealed with a blank cap.
- vi. The vent pipe work, together with the flametrap outlet(s) should remain connected to allow the tank to breathe.
- vii. The manway chamber lid should be replaced.
- viii. The water content of the tank(s) should be inspected at intervals at least once per month and any reduction in level should be immediately notified to the Licensing Authority.

b. Manway Chamber Seal Method

Sufficient product should be left in the tank or diesel or water introduced to maintain an internal fill point seal. The manhole chamber should be filled with salt free sand to a sufficient depth to cover all pipe work or to 150mm of the level of the manway surface cover, whichever is the greater. The manway chamber should be sealed above the sand with a screed of sand and cement mixture of at least 50mm.

With the exception of items iii and viii this procedure should also incorporate the method detailed above in 4.1(a).

c. Hydrophobic Foam Fill Method

The tank may be filled with foam having the designed compressive strength of 15 tonnes per sq m generated on site and pumped directly into the tank. Tanks filled with hydrophobic foam are reinstated by mechanical removal of the foam using a solvent and vacuum extraction method.

The procedure for filling the tank with foam, including the treatment of residual petrol with an emulsifier, should be carried out in accordance with the manufacturers/suppliers instructions.

d. Conversion to auto-diesel

Where the tank is to be converted for the storage of auto-diesel, it will not be necessary to clean-out the tank provided the tank is completely filled (with diesel) and the pipe work feeding the dispenser(s) is flushed through to remove/dilute any residual petrol and/or vapours. To prevent the accumulation of petroleum vapour in the diesel tank, the tank should be put in use for a period of at least 12 months to ensure that diesel is being flushed

through the tank, dispersing any residual petroleum. Section 15.2.5.3 of the 'Blue Guide'⁴ details a procedure for filling the tank and flushing the pipe work.

e. Conversion to other hydrocarbon products

Using the tank for the storage of kerosene or waste engine oil for example, will involve cleaning the tank to ensure that any residues from the previous use does not contaminate the product to be stored. Section 15.2.5.4 of the 'Blue Guide' details a procedure for cleaning the tank.

Where a tank is converted to the storage of an oil for use in boilers and other heating appliances, the fill pipe adaptor should be changed to a different size from that fitted to petrol tanks.

Where a tank is split into one or more compartments, it is not acceptable to use a compartment for the storage of heating oil if any of the other compartments are used to store petroleum-spirit.

In order to avoid any future confusion, all notices and labels referring to petroleum spirit must be removed. It is also recommended that the fill pipe is labelled to identify the alternative liquid stored together with its working capacity i.e. 97% of the full capacity expressed in litres.

Contractors are expected to use safe working practices when carrying out product conversion work at petrol filling stations. Guidance regarding model work procedures and safety method statements can be found in the IP Publication 'Code of Practice for Contractors Working on Petrol Filling Stations'⁵.

4.2 Tanks Left Unused but with Product Remaining

Where any tank or compartment is dormant due to a surplus storage capacity the temporarily safe methods detailed in '4 – Rendering the tank(s) temporarily safe' need not be complied with provided a liquid internal fillpipe seal is maintained and the tank is subject to the same maintenance and security scheme as the remaining active petrol tanks on the site, i.e. the Conditions of Licence are complied with.

5 Certification

- 5.1 The contractor carrying out the work to render a tank(s) temporarily safe must complete a decommissioning certificate, leaving one copy with the site operator or owner and forwarding the other copy to the Licensing Authority.

⁴ Guidance for the Design, Construction, Modification and Maintenance of Filling Stations (3rd Edition)

⁵ IP 'Code of Practice for Contractors Working on Petrol Filling Stations' (ISBN O 85293 1948).

6 Pumps

- 6.1 Pumps may be made temporarily safe by being left in situ or permanently removed from the site. In either situation, precautions must be taken to ensure that the site is maintained in a safe condition.

a. Pumps Left on Site

Where pumps are to be left on the site in the case of temporary closure the following measures should be undertaken:

- The pumps should be electrically isolated, all suction lines drained and flexible connectors disconnected.
- The pump suction entries should be plugged off and the suction lines capped off in the under pump cavity.
- The under pump cavity should be in filled with dry sand and a screed of a sand/cement mixture.
- The pumps should be protected and secured from vandalism by sturdy wooden encasement or other suitable material.

This method is only suitable for short periods of decommissioning. If the period of disuse is considered not to be short term (less than 12 months) then the pumps should be completely removed from site.

b. Pumps Removed from Site

Where pumps are to be removed from site (in the case of permanent decommissioning of the site or extended period of disuse) the following measures should be undertaken:

- Isolate electrically, drain all suction lines and disconnect the flexible connectors.
- Plug off the pump suction entries and remove the pumps to a safe place of storage.
- Cap off the suction line in the under pump cavity.
- Infill the under pump cavity with dry sand and a sand/cement mixture screed over the top.

7 Interceptor

- 7.1 In the case of sites decommissioned on a temporary basis the interceptor chambers should be emptied of all liquid/sludge contents by a hazardous waste disposal contractor. The chambers should then be replenished with clean water.

8 Electrical installation

- 8.1 Where the whole site is to be temporarily vacated or decommissioned the electrical installation should be disconnected by the electrical supplier who will apply the appropriate degree of disconnection.

9 Reinstatement following temporary decommissioning

- 9.1 Given that a tank or filling station can be temporarily decommissioned for a period of up to one year by the approval of this Authority. Periods exceeding one year the procedures for

Error! Reference source not found. - Error! Reference source not found.
reinstatement will be site specific and should meet the requirements of the blue book and agreed with the Licensing Authority.

9.2 Reinstatement after one or more years

A filling station that has been fully decommissioned for up to a year or longer, the site requires an assessment by following the guidance given in the Health and Safety Executive publication HSG146. In addition, the Blue Guide, to establish whether or not there are sufficient adequate safeguards in place to control the risks of fire or explosion from the storage and handling of petrol.

Any tanks or pipe work taken out of use for up to one year or more the tank, or in the case of a compartmented tank, the compartments and associated pipe work should first be tested by one of the recognised methods of precision leak tests for the purpose of establishing the suitability for re-use as a storage vessel.

9.3 Reinstatement after Short Term Decommissioning

In the case of tanks and associated pipe work taken out of service pending cleaning, modifications or site development i.e. a short period of decommissioning, the only testing necessary should be that to prove the integrity of the tank lid gasket and pipe work reconnections as appropriate.

The filling station's electrical installation should be subjected to a full examination and test by a competent electrical contractor who must complete the necessary reporting documentation as detailed in Section 14 of the 'Blue Guide'⁶.

9.6 Before petrol and other products are reintroduced into the storage tanks a full visual inspection will be carried out by the Licensing Authority and any defects or omissions must be rectified or replaced as necessary.

⁶ Guidance for the Design, Construction, Modification & Maintenance of Filling Stations (3rd Edition) ISBN 978 0 85293 600 9
Page 5 of 5