

SPCC Regulations

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initially provided rules for above ground fuel storage tanks in 1974 and included requirements for regulated facilities to prepare a Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plan. These requirements applied to aviation facilities at that time; however, many facilities were not aware of the requirements.

Mobile Refuelers

The EPA issued a final rule in December 2006 that included a new approach for mobile refueler trucks on airport property. Under this new rule, refuelers no longer have to be parked in an area that provides a sized secondary containment for the trucks, which included the entire volume of the largest truck plus sufficient freeboard for precipitation. Refueler trucks still must meet the “general secondary containment rule” and provide some form of secondary containment in the form of the following:

- Dikes, berms, retaining walls
- Curbing
- Culverting, gutters, or other drainage systems
- Weirs, booms, or other barriers
- Spill diversion ponds
- Retention ponds
- Sorbent materials

This means that you must provide some mechanism of capturing a spill in the area the truck is parked, whether it is in the form of curbs, dikes, oil/water separators, or other diversion device. The EPA also allows the use of an “active containment system,” which typically includes use of a facility spill kit that can be deployed in the event of a spill. The engineer that certifies your SPCC Plan will provide the best engineering solution to your site-specific arrangement.

Compliance Date

The new rule included a compliance date of July 1, 2009, but this date has created some confusion in the aviation industry. The date only applies to the more stringent portions of the new rules such as tank testing requirements, brittle fracture requirements, and others. Since the EPA *reduced* the requirements for mobile refuelers, the compliance date does not apply and general secondary containment should have been in place previous to the new rule. Additionally the date of July 1, 2009, provides time for newer facilities (built after August 16, 2002) to prepare and implement their SPCC Plan. If your facility was built before August 16, 2002, then you should already have an SPCC Plan and you should only have to modify the plan to meet the new requirements. If you don't have an SPCC Plan and your facility was built before August 16, 2002, you are out of compliance and subject to an EPA fine if you are inspected or have a spill.

Loading/Unloading Areas and Loading/Unloading Racks

The EPA provides different requirements for Loading/Unloading Areas and for Loading/Unloading Racks; however, the regulations currently do not provide a definition. The EPA has proposed a definition in the newly proposed rules of October 2007 as follows:

Loading/Unloading Rack means a structure necessary for loading or unloading a tank truck or tank car, which is located at a facility subject to the requirements of this part. A loading/unloading rack includes a platform, gangway, or loading/unloading arm; and any combination of the following: piping assemblages, valves, pumps, shut-off devices, overfill sensors, or personnel safety devices.

The picture below shows an arrangement that would be considered a loading/unloading rack. Note that the fuel transfer is provided through a loading arm and allows for filling a refueler truck from the top. A platform is provided for personnel to monitor the transfer.



Most aviation facilities provide fuel transfer from their tanks through flexible piping or a hose. These facilities do not appear to meet the requirement for a loading/unloading rack as no platform, gangway or loading/unloading arm is provided.

At the tank farm, the EPA regulations require facilities that have a loading/unloading rack to provide *sized* secondary containment adequate to contain the largest compartment of the semi-truck that delivers fuel or refueler truck that receives fuel. However, loading/unloading areas do not need to meet the *sized* requirement and only need to meet the general secondary containment rules (much like refueler parking areas).

This means that facilities that have loading/unloading areas must include some provision for capturing a spill in the area where fuel is loaded or unloaded from the tanks. This must be in the form of the following.

- Dikes, berms, retaining walls
- Curbing
- Culverting, gutters, or other drainage systems
- Weirs, booms, or other barriers
- Spill diversion ponds
- Retention ponds
- Sorbent materials

As discussed above, the EPA allows the use of an active containment system, which typically includes use of a facility spill kit that can be deployed in the event of a spill. Again, the engineer who certifies your SPCC Plan will provide the best engineering solution to your site specific arrangement.

[Members are strongly encouraged to review the EPA's SPCC Mobile Refueler Fact Sheet.](#)

Members with questions on SPCC compliance may contact [Eric R. Byer](#).

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