



ANNUAL UPDATE FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2025

SB 181

COMPLIANCE WITH WATER QUALITY STANDARDS AND CLASSIFICATION

February 3, 2026

This update to the Water Quality Control Commission summarizes the activities of the Division of Oil and Public Safety’s Storage Tank Program related to SB 181 for calendar year 2025.

Inspection Activities for Calendar Year 2025

Storage Tank Facility Inspections Completed.....	2,388
Number of Notices of Violations Issued.....	965
Number of Notices of Violations Resolved.....	805
Number of Enforcement Orders Issued.....	18
Number of Enforcement Orders Resolved.....	8
Number of Tanks with Delivery Prohibition.....	61

Remediation Activities for Calendar Year 2025

Number of Open Confirmed Releases.....	551
Number of 2025 Confirmed Releases.....	165
Number of Cleanups Initiated.....	165
Number of Cleanups Completed.....	149

State Fund Information for Calendar Year 2025

Number of Reimbursement Applications Reviewed by the PST Committee.....	74
Number of Supplemental Reimbursement Applications Approved by Staff.....	730
Reimbursement by the PST Committee (including State Lead/LUST Trust).....	\$19,109,795

Summary of Statistics

In 2025, the Division of Oil and Public Safety (OPS) performed 2,388 inspections of petroleum storage tank facilities, fostered a high 94% compliance rate among tank systems, began cleanup on all releases reported, reimbursed just under \$20 million for petroleum remediation, and maintained leadership among national associations and conferences.

At the start of January 2025, there were 554 open releases, and by December 31, 2025, OPS had closed 149 of them. The number of open petroleum release events remained below 600, totaling 551 in January 2026. This indicates the release numbers have remained stable over the past several years.

OPS continues to lead EPA Region 8, completing 149 cleanups in calendar year 2025. Several factors contribute to this success, including release prevention and detection efforts, early identification of releases, improved conceptual site models (CSMs), and the implementation of effective corrective action plans (CAPs).



While the implementation of the Tier III and Tier IV No Further Actions (NFAs) were successful in closing low-risk legacy sites, the majority of NFAs granted during 2025 were Tier I and Tier II (140 combined), which further indicates the success of release prevention and detection.

OPS Program Achievements and Improvements

Listed below are achievements and improvements made by OPS to more effectively protect groundwater from contamination associated with releases from petroleum storage tank systems and to protect the solvency of the Petroleum Storage Tank Fund.

Petroleum Storage Tank Regulations and Outreach

OPS started 2025 with new revisions to the Colorado Petroleum Storage Tank Regulations (7 CCR 1101-14) that included:

- The adoption of current ASTM International and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) fuel quality codes and new volatility requirements for Colorado fuels,
- The clarification of periodic system testing requirements while in temporary closure,
- The alignment of aboveground storage tank rules with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) codes,
- The introduction of Certified Aboveground Storage Tank Installer requirements,
- Revisions to the definitions of confirmed and suspected releases,
- Updates to our soil and soil vapor cleanup standards, and
- The introduction of a percent deductible for reimbursement.

These regulations were effective January 1, 2025, and implementation was successful throughout the year. OPS continues to utilize its quarterly bulletin, addressed to over three thousand tank owners, contractors, and consultants, to communicate regulatory requirements and OPS expectations. In addition, we held our triennial in-person Keys to Compliance Outreach events in Grand Junction and Denver over the summer and fall. The events were well attended, and included topics such as new regulations, fuel quality, financial incentives for compliance and tank removal, remediation standards and protocols, and Fund reimbursement.

Risk-Based Inspections

In an effort to prevent petroleum releases, OPS began varying the frequency of facility inspections and the facility owner/operator's level of involvement in 2017. The inspection frequency is determined by OPS using facility compliance history, equipment material and age, previous releases, and other criteria to identify higher-risk facilities versus lower-risk facilities. Higher-risk facilities are inspected annually and OPS announces these inspections ahead of time to encourage owner/operator involvement. The OPS Inspector performs a compliance inspection as usual, conducts an onsite compliance records review, and uses the opportunity to educate the owner/operator on compliance tips and discuss the owner/operator's monthly and annual inspections.

OPS performed 2,388 inspections of petroleum storage tank systems in 2025.

Storage Tank Operational Compliance

The Technical Compliance Rate (TCR) for underground storage tank systems in Colorado remains quite high at 94% at the end of the calendar year 2025. A top priority for OPS is to prevent petroleum releases, and maintaining a high compliance rate is the most direct way for our regulated tank owners to help us achieve that goal.

Colorado Recognized Environmental Professional (CO-REP) Program

OPS designed a new program and branded it the CO-REP Program (Colorado Recognized Environmental Professional). The main goals of the CO-REP Program are to: Maximize quality of work by encouraging work and submittals (reports, reimbursement requests) for OPS projects that meet OPS published Regulations, Policies, and Guidance; Maintain integrity and public safety by ensuring CO-REPs are engaged in appropriate, risk-based, and cost-effective decision-making at all levels of project development as guided by OPS policy/procedure; and Minimize administrative burdens to OPS.

OPS has started accepting and reviewing applications and Quality Assurance Plans (QAPs) with exams taking place in the last two weeks of February. Implementation of the CO-REPs will begin on March 1, 2026.

Update to the Soil Risk-Based Screening Levels (RBSLs)

OPS had not updated the soil RBSLs since 1999. Since then, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has updated toxicity and exposure criteria. To ensure the soil RBSLs align with current toxicity and exposure criteria, OPS contracted TRC Companies' risk assessors to conduct the soil RBSL evaluation for surficial and subsurface exposure pathways. As a result of this work, tetraethyl lead (TEL), 1,2-dichloroethane (1,2-DCA), naphthalene, and ethylene dibromide (EDB) have been introduced as contaminants of concern. The Petroleum Storage Tank Regulations were updated in 2024 and became effective on January 1, 2025, incorporating the updated soil RBSLs. The new Tier I RBSLs can be seen here in [Article 5](#).

Petroleum Storage Tank Committee Policy 29 for Tank Removal Costs

All UST systems installed in Colorado after August 2008 are secondarily contained and inherently pose a lower risk of a release to the environment. Releases from these newer secondarily contained tank systems are usually detected earlier, are small in size, and consequently are easier and less expensive to remediate. In an effort to reduce the environmental risk posed by an aging tank population, the Committee authorized Policy 29 to use monies in the Petroleum Storage Tank Fund to provide reimbursement of UST removal costs. This enabled tank owners or operators to proactively make decisions to replace or close aging UST systems, with replacement systems being upgraded to include secondary containment.

In April 2024, the Petroleum Storage Tank Committee approved an increase in the Policy 29 amounts for reimbursement for UST removal. Policy 29 now allows for:

- UST(s) installed prior to August 2008:

- Reimbursement is \$2 per gallon of UST volume removed, up to a maximum of \$60,000 per facility.
- Tanks with a capacity of up to 2,000 gallons would be eligible for a maximum of \$4,000.
- UST(s) installed August 2008 and thereafter
 - Reimbursement is \$1 per gallon of UST volume removed, up to a maximum of \$30,000 per facility.
 - Tanks with a capacity of up to 2,000 gallons would be eligible for a maximum of \$2,000.

In 2025, the Committee approved the reimbursement of \$1,238,284 for the removal of aging USTs in accordance with Policy 29, more than doubling the amount reimbursed in 2024.

Deductible Waiver Incentive

In addition to Policy 29, the Committee offers an incentive to reduce the financial burden for an owner/operator who discovers confirmed releases while removing and permanently closing their entire tank system. The Committee finds that maximum environmental benefit is achieved when tank systems are removed altogether and not replaced, ending fuel-dispensing activities at the property. Therefore, an owner/operator's maximum operational compliance is achieved through the complete discontinuation of fuel-dispensing activities. This incentive is in the form of a waiver of the \$10,000 deductible when an owner/operator seeks reimbursement from the Fund for cleanup of a confirmed release that is determined to be eligible by the Committee. This tank removal incentive has some limitations and requirements including:

- A maximum of 10 facilities per owner/operator, with only one incentive allowed per facility.
- The facility must be in significant operational compliance with release detection and release reporting as identified by OPS and evaluated by the Committee.
- The incentive only applies to systems removed and not replaced.

The Committee waived \$30k in deductible amounts due to contamination found during the removal of aged tanks, making for a combined total of \$1,268,284 in incentives.