

New UST Systems: The Installation Inspection Process

After an application for a permit to install has been approved, there are a series of phase inspections that tank owners are asked to schedule with the central office permitting coordinator. During these inspections, S.C. Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) staff will observe the following:

- **PHASE 1: Tank Installation** – During this inspection, tanks should be readily accessible for visual inspection. The type and number of tanks is confirmed. Depending on the type of interstice (dry or brine filled), the inspector will check information related to the conditions at the time the tank(s) left the manufacturer and the conditions at the time of the inspection. As part of the inspection, the SCDES staff will:
 - Ask for the shipping manifest;
 - Ask for current vacuum readings for each tank interstice (dry interstice only);
 - Walk around each tank and look for obvious signs of damage;
 - Look at the backfill material to make sure it is appropriate for the type of tank and that it is clean and free of debris; and
 - Note if any type of tank anchoring method is present.

The inspector will notify the permitting coordinator in the central office if there is any apparent damage to the tank. The permitting coordinator will work directly with the contractor to request corrective actions and to request documentation of repairs.

- **PHASE 2: Piping** – During the Phase 2 inspection, SCDES staff will review the installation of the piping. The entire piping run should be visible for inspection. Clamshells or other fittings that will prevent the viewing of soap testing of the joints should not be installed until after the Phase 2 inspection. Other Phase 2 activities might include observing conditions in the piping trench to ensure the trench is free of trash and debris and confirming as-built maps are completed.
- **PHASE 3: Complete Installation Inspection** – This inspection is done after receipt of the permit to operate application package to confirm that all installed equipment matches the application. If issues are found that cannot be fixed on site, documentation must be provided to the permitting coordinator prior to final issuance of the permit

to operate. Activities conducted during a Phase 3 inspection include:

- Confirmation that spill buckets are present and installed;
 - Confirmation that overfill prevention equipment is present and installed;
 - Check the Automatic Tank Gauge for alarms and ensure all sensors are configured properly;
 - Check to ensure that the interstices are open with no obstruction in all Submersible Turbine Pump sumps; and
 - Ensure that all interstices located inside dispenser pans and transition sumps are open or closed based on the permit to operate application.
- **PHASE 4: Compliance Assistance/Outreach Inspection** – The Compliance Assistance/Outreach inspection is designed to provide one-on-one in person guidance. After the permit to operate is approved, SCDES staff will contact the owner to schedule the outreach at least seven to 10 days in advance. The owner and operator will have the opportunity to meet with central office staff and the regional inspector. The installation contractor is encouraged to attend. The outreach inspection is a great opportunity for owners and operators to ask questions about current and upcoming regulatory requirements.

If the facility is in compliance at the conclusion of the inspection, this is considered the first inspection and an In Compliance Letter is issued. The next inspection will be in one year. However, if Part 1 violations are discovered, a Notice of Alleged Violation will be provided to the owner, requiring a 15-day deadline to correct the violation(s). If Part 2 violations are discovered, an Outreach Inspection Letter will be provided to the owner, and the regional inspector will reach out within 90 days to schedule a follow-up inspection.

Contact **Ellie Griffin** at (803) 898-2541 or ellis.griffin@des.sc.gov if you have questions concerning any of the phases of inspections above.



QAPP 5.0 is now LIVE!

The EPA-approved underground storage tank (UST) QAPP Revision 5.0 is now live. Below are some of the many updates to the document.

UPDATED RECORD AND DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

Updates have been made to clarify required documentation for reporting.

- **Monitoring Well Abandonment Reports:** Appendix I now requires the inclusion of either a site map or a table summarizing the status of all wells associated with the release (e.g., abandoned, not located, etc.).
- **Photographic Documentation:** If applicable, photos of unusual site conditions (i.e., flooding, vehicles parked on monitoring wells, construction rubble covering the monitoring well, etc.), must be included in IGWA, Tier I, Tier II Assessment, Groundwater Sampling and Case Reports.

UPDATED GROUNDWATER PURGING METHODS

This section has been updated with the most recent EPA Groundwater Purging Standard Operating Procedure.

- **Stability parameter requirements have been revised** including the removal of temperature and dissolved oxygen.
- **Stability must now be determined using both volumetric and parameter-based requirements** for multi-volume purging.

UPDATED APPENDIX B: RISK-BASED SCREENING LABEL (RBSL) LOOK-UP TABLE

Several updates have been made to the RBSL Tables.

- **Tables D3 and D4** now reflect updated RBSL values.
- **Table D5** has been revised, with the vapor intrusion table replaced with Soil Ingestion and Dermal Contact Table.
- **Table D7: Surface Water** was added.

Other sections also have important updates. Be sure to take a moment to review the following sections: IGWA; Tier I; Tier II; Well Installation; Granulated Activated Carbon Units; Monitoring Well Developments; Site Rehabilitation; In-site Remediation and Injection; and Remedial Excavation for the latest requirements.

REMINDER: SITE WORK NOTIFICATIONS

To help keep everything running smoothly, remember:

- **The UST Division Project Managers and the UST Management Division QAPP Coordinator must be notified** of UST site work in South Carolina at least four days prior to the start of field activities; and
- **If there are any changes or conflicts** with the date(s) of site activities, both the UST Project Manager and QAPP Coordinator must be notified within 24 hours of those changes.

If you have questions, contact **Haley Anderson** at (803) 545-4402 or Haley.Anderson@des.sc.gov.

UST Site Rehabilitation Contractors Meeting

The Underground Storage Tank (UST) Management Program hosted a UST Site Rehabilitation Contractor meeting in Columbia on July 15.

Guests were welcomed at a reception where project managers and contractors had the opportunity to connect and engage in a relaxed, collaborative setting. Following the reception, the UST Program presented programmatic updates and case studies in a power point presentation highlighting advancements in petroleum remediation technology and offering contractors the opportunity to ask questions.

Attendee feedback was highly positive, with comments such as, "Nice work by all!" and "It was great to see everyone and put faces with names." In fact, the UST Program received such strong positive feedback that we look forward to hosting another meeting next summer.

Overall, the contractor meeting served as an effective platform for discussing programmatic updates, site remediation processes and emerging challenges, while strengthening partnerships and expanding outreach. The event reflects the UST Program's ongoing commitment to providing high-quality customer service.



Billing Address & Professional Geologist Update

SUPERB INVOICING REMINDERS

To ensure contractor payments are processed without delay, follow these essential invoicing guidelines. Adhering to these standards helps our accounting system accurately track and verify all transactions.

MANDATORY INVOICING STANDARDS

- **Original Wet Signatures Required:** All submitted invoices must feature an original wet signature from an authorized representative. Digital or photocopies of signatures will not be accepted.
- **Unique Invoice Numbering:** Each invoice must have a unique, original invoice number. Our accounting system is designed to automatically reject any duplicated invoice numbers to prevent errors and fraud. If you do not have a system in place to track these invoice numbers, feel free to use the cost agreement number unless there are multiple invoices for the cost agreement. For those you may add letters (example: 60598A, 60598B).
- **Deductible Invoices and Credit:** Even if an invoice falls under the \$25,000 deductible amount, it must still be submitted to our office. This ensures tank owners receive proper credit toward meeting their deductible threshold.
- **Proof of Payment for Deductibles:** For any invoice submitted as a deductible, you must include proof of payment. Acceptable documentation includes:
 - A notarized letter stating you received payment; and
 - A photocopy of a canceled check (front & back).

Submitting incomplete or non-compliant documentation may result in the invoice being returned for correction which will delay processing. Please email Sherry.Taylor@des.sc.gov or call (803) 898-0618 if you have any questions about invoicing.

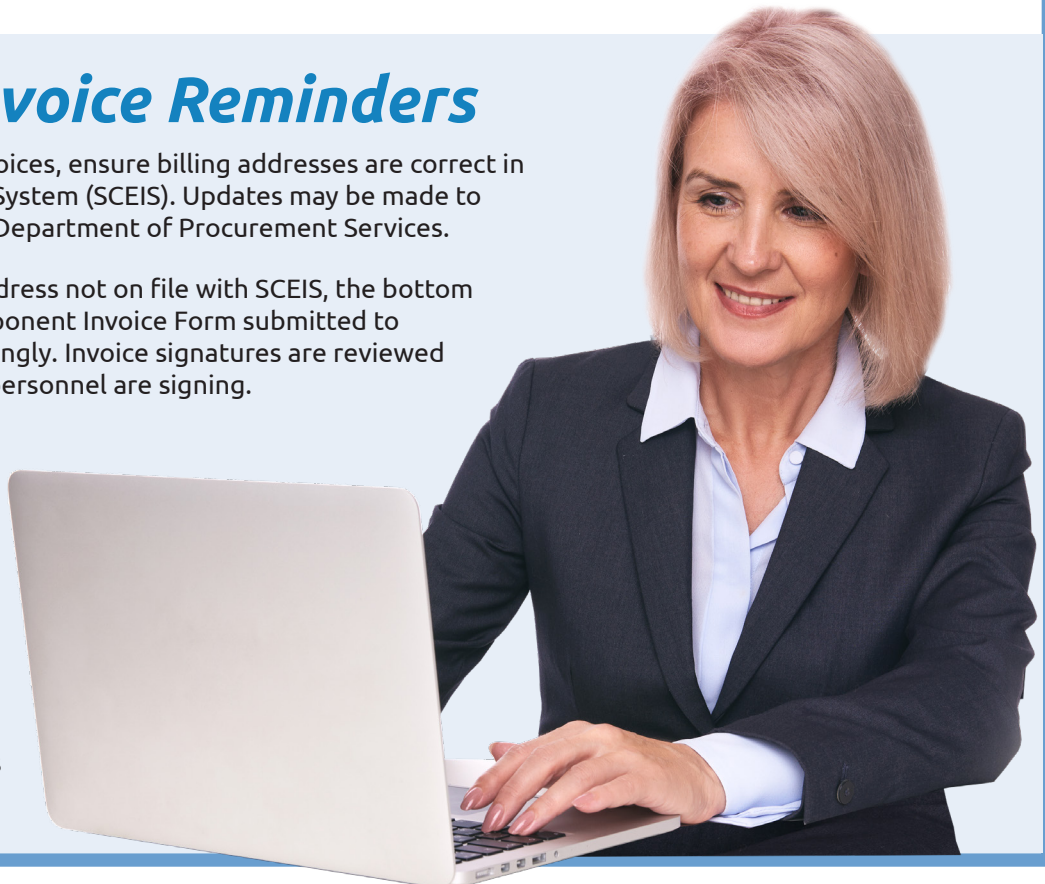
Superb Invoice Reminders

To ensure timely payment of invoices, ensure billing addresses are correct in The S.C. Enterprise Information System (SCEIS). Updates may be made to Vendor Registration on the S.C. Department of Procurement Services.

If payment is to be sent to an address not on file with SCEIS, the bottom portion of the Assessment Component Invoice Form submitted to SCDES must be filled out accordingly. Invoice signatures are reviewed by SCDES to ensure authorized personnel are signing.

Please ensure PE/PG information is up to date. Updates should be made concurrently with new PE/PG staff additions as well as yearly with ACQAP renewals.

Call **Michelle Dennison** at (803) 898-0626 or email Michelle.Dennison@des.sc.gov to make updates or verify names on file.



SUPERB Act Changes

On May 6, 2026, the South Carolina State Legislature passed Bill S.893 and the Governor signed into state law on May 18, 2026. This bill amended portions of the existing State Underground Petroleum Environmental Response Bank (Superb) Act.

The Superb Act established the Superb Account to ensure the availability of funds for the rehabilitation of releases as sites contaminated with petroleum or petroleum products released from a UST and for administration of the UST regulatory program.

The bill primarily amended the following. According to Section 44-2-40 (B), "The department shall use the fund to pay the usual, customary and reasonable costs of site rehabilitation up to a maximum of two million dollars per occurrence as a result of a release from an underground storage tank containing petroleum or petroleum products for releases that were reported to the Department before July 1, 1993 and in excess of \$25,000 and up to a maximum of two million dollars per occurrence for site rehabilitation for releases reported to the Department on or after July 1, 1993." This is a change from the previous amount of \$1 million.

Next, the bill amendments increase tank registration fees (annual fees) for the South Carolina Division of UST Management. "Beginning July 1, 2029, the annual renewal fee for each tank will increase to two hundred dollars per tank. In 2034, the annual renewal fee for each tank will again increase to two hundred fifty dollars per tank. In 2039, the annual renewal fee for each tank will finally increase to three hundred dollars per tank." These increases will be permanent.

Finally, amendments to the bill will add one additional member to the Superb Advisory Committee representing the South Carolina Convenience and Petroleum Marketers Association. This member must be an underground storage tank owner in substantial compliance as defined in Section 44-2-20 (22).

The Superb Advisory Committee is established "to study the implementation

and administration of the Superb program, including the Superb Account, the Superb Financial Responsibility Fund and the regulatory requirements applicable to underground storage tanks; to make recommendations to the Department and the General Assembly on ways to improve the efficiency of the program and to maximize available funds; and to advise the Department on administration of the program."

If you have questions about any changes to the Superb Act, please contact **Eric Cathcart** at **(803) 898-7988** or eric.cathcart@des.sc.gov.



Notable UST Program Staff Changes

The UST Program has recently experienced some exciting changes within our senior-level staff. The program remains committed to providing our stakeholders with the high level of customer service and assistance you have come to expect.

Please join me in welcoming the following new staff members.

- We are pleased to announce that **Courtney Evans** stepped into the role of Manager of the Regulatory and Compliance Section in March 2026. Courtney joined SCDES in 2018, beginning her career as the delivery prohibition coordinator, then as the follow-up coordinator for the UST Program before moving into the permitting and operator training coordinator position. With her deep program knowledge, strong leadership skills and commitment to excellence, Courtney is well prepared to guide the section through even the most complex compliance challenges. Please join us in congratulating Courtney on this well-deserved achievement!
- We are excited to welcome **Haley Anderson**, who joined the UST Program in January 2026 as our new Quality Assurance/QAPP Manager. Haley brings several years of laboratory experience and a strong technical background to the team. Her expertise will play a key role in supporting the Program's quality initiatives and ensuring continued excellence.
- **Eric Cathcart** has transitioned into a new role within the UST Program as the Customer Service Liaison. In this position, he will provide site history summary letters, coordinate public information sessions, facilitate discussions with stakeholders and support additional customer-focused initiatives. Eric brings more than 30 years of experience with SCDES and a strong commitment to delivering exceptional customer service.
- **Erin Epperson** jumped into her new role as Manager of the Assessment and Non-Permitted Petroleum Section in June 2025 and she's already bringing a fresh spark to the team. Before this, Erin made a big impact in the UST Program as a project manager, where she built a strong reputation for her knowledge and get-it-done attitude. She's hit the ground running in her new position and her enthusiasm and experience are already making a difference.
- We are excited to announce that **Jeffrey "Ed" Mendenhall** has stepped into the role of Director of the UST Management Division! Ed joined SCDES in 2015 as a project manager in the UST Program and since then he has provided outstanding leadership while managing the Assessment and Non-Permitted Petroleum Section. His dedication, expertise and steady commitment to our mission have made a lasting impact across the program. Please congratulate Ed as he began his new duties in April 2025. We look forward to the continued vision and leadership he brings to the division!



Contact Information

SCDES's UST Management Division is always ready to provide customer service to our stakeholders. There are several points of contact that can assist you with any questions or needs.

Technical Assistance	(803) 898-2544
Regulatory & Compliance Assistance.....	UST Main Line, (803) 898-0589
General Assistance.....	Eric Cathcart , Customer Service Liaison, (803) 898-7988
Website	des.sc.gov/UST