



Tank Lining Upgrades For Gasoline Storage Tanks Helps Meet Compatibility Issues With Ethanol Blended Fuels

With the gradual introduction of ethanol as a replacement for MTBE in gasoline products, the question of tank compatibility has suddenly become the concern of storage tank owners in many states. Some steel tanks with interior linings and some fiberglass tanks may have component materials that are not compatible with these newer blended fuels. New tank lining technologies can upgrade some fiberglass tanks and lined steel tanks saving tank owners thousands of dollars in replacement costs.

([PRWEB](#)) July 25, 2004 -- When the United States EPA told the state of Louisiana that thirteen parishes in the Baton Rouge area had poor enough air quality to require some action, the fallout was to affect more than the refineries that would stop using MTBE in their gasoline to help clean the air. At first the retailers of gasoline in these parishes were expecting a few minor inconveniences -- having to use up and clean out the older gasoline products with the MTBE additive to make way for the new alcohol blended fuels, and pay a couple of cents more per gallon for the switch over at the refineries. After all, this was a small price to pay for cleaner air. When the smoke cleared, a small number gasoline retailers found they had more than minor inconveniences to deal with; they had tanks that were not compatible with the alcohol-blended fuels. Storing the new fuels in certain tanks could cause an internal lining or an entire fiberglass tank to fail.

Unfortunately, there was generally no expectation in the 1980's that all motor fuel tank systems would eventually need to handle ethanol or other alcohol additives. In March 2000, the California State Water Resources Control Board issued an Advisory to Underground Storage Tank Owners/Operators Regarding Ethanol-Blend Fuel Compatibility. The purpose for this advisory was to notify tank owners that "some underground storage tank and piping (UST) systems may not be compatible with ethanol-blend fuels".

We caught up with Jeff Colner of Armor Shield Tank Lining & Repair, a network of specially trained tank linings and coatings applicators serving the storage tank industry. The network, around since the late 1960's, has lined thousands of fuel storage tanks for such companies as ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell and Texaco as well as hundreds of regional and local companies with fuel storage tanks.

We asked Jeff who should be concerned about the compatibility issue, -- "As a rule of thumb, fiberglass tanks, and single-wall fiberglass and flexible piping installed prior to 1/1/1984 should be investigated to find out if they are compatible before changing over to the newer blended fuels. Also, if a tank has been lined in the past, checkout the paperwork just to make sure the lining product is listed to contain what you're going to be storing in it."

Jeff added, -- "In addition, there were some adhesives, glues, sealants, and gaskets used around the piping and other parts of older UST systems that should be a concern, and may even be an issue for some new installations if the contractor failed to use proper materials."



Since many tanks across the country were lined to meet the 1998 EPA corrosion deadline, we asked about lining compatibility specifics. He responded, "Well, there were people out there who refused to see that far down the road and just wanted as low a cost as they could get to comply with the federally mandated tank corrosion upgrades. And there were people doing tank lining out there in different parts of the country who had no idea what the effect alcohol-blended fuels would have in the future. But some of us in the industry saw it coming years before it was an issue. We've offered our customers a line of ethanol and methanol compatible lining products since the 1980s. Most all of our customers chose to spend the slight difference in cost, but there were tanks that were used for diesel or heating fuels at that time, which don't contain ethanol or other alcohol products and wouldn't need a compatible lining system. Pretty much everyone I came into contact with ended up with a lining product that would take them into the 21st century".

We hit on the subject of the product switchover in the Baton Rouge area. He commented, "One of our network applicators just finished lining compatibility upgrades on a number of gasoline tanks in the area."

I asked Jeff if all of the vulnerable fiberglass tanks and lined tanks in the area were now ready for the switchover. He thought for a couple of seconds and then replied, "I guess we'll know the answer to that question sometime in the future."

To get more information on Armor Shield Tank Lining services log on to www.armorshieldlining.com, or call their customer service hotline toll-free 1-888-839-0373. Email to info@armorshieldlining.com

Interview conducted by C.R. Manning

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