



PETALUMA FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION
POLICIES AND STANDARDS

CUPA Underground Storage Tank (UST) Repair & Modification Permit Policy

Policy No.: 452.4

Adopted: 02/25/2026

Approved: Amy Segui, Fire Marshal

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clearly define what types of work performed on Underground Storage Tank (UST) systems constitute permit-required activities, and to distinguish between Major CUPA Permits, Minor CUPA Permits, and work that does not require a permit, within the jurisdiction of the City of Petaluma Fire Prevention Bureau acting as the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA).

This policy is intended to provide consistency, transparency, and regulatory compliance while protecting human health, the environment, and the integrity of UST systems.

2. Authority

This policy is adopted under the authority of:

- California Health and Safety Code, Chapter 6.7
- California Code of Regulations, Title 23, Division 3, Chapter 16
- Petaluma Municipal Code
- Sonoma County CUPA Unified UST Repair/Modification Guidelines

The Fire Marshal or designee retains final authority to require permits on a case-by-case basis.

3. General Policy Statement

As a rule of thumb, any work that may affect secondary containment, spill prevention, overflow prevention, leak detection, or system integrity requires a CUPA permit.

Permit requirements are based on:

- The scope and invasiveness of the work
- Whether system components are altered, penetrated, or replaced
- Whether monitoring or release prevention functionality may be affected

4. Permit Classifications

A. Major CUPA Permit Required

A Major CUPA Permit is required for the following activities:

- Breaking, cutting, or removing concrete, asphalt, or soil over:
 - Tank slabs
 - Piping trenches
 - Dispenser islands
- Penetrating sump walls, including:
 - Installation of electrical conduit into any UST sump
- Replacement of direct-bury fill or vapor buckets
- Repairs or modifications to sumps or UDCs, including:
 - Penetration fitting repair or replacement
 - Sump riser or tank joint repairs
 - Lid replacement requiring fiberglass cutting and replacement

(Note: Test boot replacement and tightening of mechanical fittings do not require a permit.)

- Placement of a UST system into temporary closure
- Pulling new monitoring cables or replacing monitoring or release prevention components with:
 - Different make
 - Different model
 - Different part number
(i.e., not “like-for-like”)
- Cold starts that require manual console reprogramming

Major permits typically require inspector oversight, system recertification, and may require witnessed testing.

B. Minor CUPA Permit Required

A Minor CUPA Permit is required for limited-scope work that does not involve structural alteration but still affects regulated components, including:

- Installation of dispenser conversion frames
- Like-for-like replacement of:
 - Sensors
 - Leak detectors
 - Tank liquid monitoring (TLM) probes
- Replacement of:
 - Overfill prevention drop tubes

- o Ball float valves
- Repairs to:
 - o Product piping
 - o Vent piping
 - o Vapor piping
 - within a sump or UDC
- Replacement of flex connectors within a sump or UDC

Minor permits generally require plan or cut-sheet review and post-work verification.

C. Work That Does Not Require a CUPA Permit

The following activities do not require a CUPA permit, provided no additional system modification occurs:

- Test boot replacement
- Tightening of mechanical fittings
- Console cold starts where:
 - o Programming is restored from an archived configuration, and
 - o The archive matches the configuration from the last certification

All alarm history must be printed and retained in site records when applicable.

5. Emergency & After-Hours Repairs

Emergency repairs may be performed outside of normal business hours only to restore compliance or system functionality, provided that:

- Verbal notification is made to the CUPA as soon as practicable
- A permit application is submitted by the next working day

Under no circumstances may repairs or programming changes be made to bypass or defeat required system functions. Such actions are considered tampering and subject to enforcement.

6. Cold Start Policy Clarification

Cold starts require a permit only when manual reprogramming is required.

- If programming is restored from an archive that matches the last certified configuration, no permit is required.
- After a permit-required cold start:
 - o Sensor operation must be verified by the CUPA
 - o Updated system configuration documentation must be provided

7. CERS Reporting Requirements

When repairs or modifications result in changes to:

- UST facility information
- Monitoring system configuration
- Monitoring and response plans

The owner/operator is responsible for submitting updated information through CERS within 30 days of the change.

8. Enforcement

Failure to obtain required CUPA permits may result in:

- Suspension or revocation of the UST Permit to Operate
- Administrative penalties
- Additional enforcement actions as allowed by law

Responsibility for compliance rests with the UST owner and operator, regardless of contractor involvement.

9. Inspector Discretion

Due to variability in UST system design, age, and condition, the Fire Marshal or inspector may require a permit for work not explicitly listed in this policy when necessary to ensure regulatory compliance.

Operators and service providers are encouraged to consult with the Fire Prevention Bureau before commencing work when uncertainty exists.