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MTBE PROBLEMS IN PETROLEUM RETAIL SERVICE STATION DRIP PANS ARE STILL AN ISSUE OF CONCERN

Because a number of states do not require inspection of drip pans, particularly under gasoline dispensers, there is increasing evidence that deterioration of drip pans and lack of maintenance and inspection of connectors and other appurtenances are causing releases at retail service station sites. Although most people are aware that MTBE has been banned, it is still allowed in many states at content of up to 0.5%.

Discussions with those who service retail petroleum service station equipment reveal that many service station owners or operators do not call for servicing of drip pans. Inspection and maintenance are not automatically required by regulations, except in Maryland, where standards for maintaining and operating service stations are more stringent.

RT is aware of two recent cases where there are cleanup costs of more than \$200,000 due to recent releases related to lack of drip pan operation and maintenance. The drip pan situation is significant, as many petroleum distribution systems and dispenser pumps were installed in the 1990s, and are nearing the end of their useful life.

We should also mention that concentrations of TBA are being found at service station sites, and elevated concentrations of TBA can inhibit natural degradation and make it harder to clean up service station sites using In Situ bioremediation.

For more information on this, call Gary R. Brown, P.E., President, at 610-265-1510 Ext. 234 or by email at gbrown@rtenv.com.

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