

FAQs from the NWGLDE

...All you ever wanted to know about leak detection, but were afraid to ask.

2013: The 20th Anniversary of the NWGLDE

In this LUSTLine FAQs from the National Work Group on Leak Detection Evaluations (NWGLDE), the NWGLDE answers some questions related to its 20th anniversary. Note: The views expressed in this column represent those of the work group and not necessarily those of any implementing agency.

Q. What was the impetus for forming the NWGLDE?

A. The USEPA UST regulations that became effective December 22, 1998, required most UST leak detection equipment to detect either a 0.1 gph leak (annual test), or a 0.2 gph leak (monthly test) with a 95% probability of detection and a 5% probability of false alarm by no later than December 22, 1990. UST system owners and operators are required to meet any performance claims, and their manner of determination must be described in writing by the equipment manufacturer or installer.

Leak detection equipment manufacturers typically demonstrate that they meet established performance requirements by evaluating their equipment in accordance with USEPA protocol or equivalent protocol. Each USEPA protocol includes a discussion on how manufacturers can demonstrate that their leak detection equipment meets USEPA performance standards.

After review of the USEPA discussion, Curt Johnson (Alabama UST Program) was concerned that manufacturers were allowed to perform their own evaluations—only “encouraged” to perform third-party evaluations—and that no one was named to review the evaluations to ensure proper performance in accordance with the protocol requirements. As a result, Alabama began reviewing evaluations and immediately found one evaluation that had been performed directly by the equipment manufacturer, and several others that had not been properly evaluated.

Johnson soon learned that Alabama was not the only state reviewing evaluations and finding problems with them. It occurred to him that the formation of an evaluation-review work group, made up of members from other states that review evaluations, would eliminate a duplication of effort, as well as provide a list of reviewed evaluations that could be used by all states. Curt attended a USEPA regional meeting that Lisa Lund, Director of USEPA's Office of Underground Storage Tanks at that time, also happened to attend. He discussed the idea with her and was encouraged to write down the idea so that she would be able to consider it when she returned to Washington.



Curt wrote down the idea for a national work group, submitted it to Lisa Lund who approved the idea. The result was the first official meeting of the NWGLDE held on June 4, 1993 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Q. What have been the most significant accomplishments of the NWGLDE in the past 20 years?

A. The first significant accomplishment of the NWGLDE was the issuance of the first edition of the list. It was a daunting task because there were so many evaluations that had already been performed to meet the USEPA December 22, 1990, deadline. It took almost two and a half years to complete the First Edition List of Leak Detection Evaluations for Underground Storage Tank (UST) Systems, which was issued November 8, 1995. On January 31, 2013, the NWGLDE issued its 20th Edition List of Leak Detection Evaluations for Underground Storage Tank (UST) Systems.

Users of the NWGLDE List may not realize that the Work Group still issues “editions” of the list (see the “Downloads” at NWGLDE.org), since the NWGLDE established a website that continuously updates NWGLDE listings. The establishment of this website at NWGLDE.org was another major Work Group accomplishment, making the NWGLDE listings of leak detection equipment readily available to all interested parties in this country, as well as those interested in other countries around the world.

Prior to the NWGLDE website, distribution of NWGLDE listings was hit or miss because it depended initially on sending out copies of each edition of the list by e-mail, snail mail, and later

FAQs... continued from page 22

posting an electronic copy on a very hard to find location on USEPA's website. Since these editions were updated only annually in January of each year, by December of the following year, there were many additions and revisions to the list that remained unpublished for up to 12 months prior to the issuance of the next edition of the list.

Another significant accomplishment was the NWGLDE evolving into a work group that not only reviews third-party evaluations of leak detection equipment, but also reviews new protocols and new revisions to existing protocols to ensure they are at least as stringent as the original group of USEPA protocols. The resulting list of protocols that have been found to be acceptable by the NWGLDE can be found under "Protocols" on the website.

Probably the most significant NWGLDE accomplishment of all was gaining the respect of the UST regulatory community as well as the UST leak detection industry in not only this country, but in many other countries in the world that consider our list as the authority on whether or not underground storage tank leak detection equipment has been properly evaluated.

Q. *How many members did the NWGLDE have in the last 20 years; who were they; and with whom were they affiliated?*

A. The original work group consisted of 11 members—Curt Johnson (Alabama), Lamar Bradley (Tennessee), Mike Kadri (Michigan), Russ Brauksiek (New York), Harold Scott (USEPA Region 10), Beth DeHaas (Maine), Shahla Farahnak (California), Randy Nelson (USEPA Region 7), Allen Martinets (Texas), David Wiley (USEPA OUST), and Tony Ritcherson (Alabama). Members were added as others needed to leave the WG.

The members that were added and since left the NWGLDE are Ellen Van Duzee (USEPA Region

10), Jennifer Bravinder (USEPA Region 9), Scott Bacon (California), Jeff Tobin (Montana), Bill Fagert (USEPA OUST), Anton Roszypal (Texas), John Kneee (South Carolina), Tom Springer (Oklahoma), Jon Reeder (Manatee County, Florida), Edward Olson (Minnesota), Mark Lenox (Missouri), John Cernero (USEPA Region 6), and Sharon Sadlon (Alaska).

Current members of the NWGLDE are Curt Johnson, Chair (Alabama), Lamar Bradley, Vice Chair (Tennessee), Greg Bareta (Wisconsin), Mike Juranty (New Hampshire), Bill Moore (Utah), Marcia Poxson (Michigan), Shaheer Muhanna (Georgia), Helen Robbins (Connecticut), Peter Rollo (Delaware), Tim Smith (USEPA OUST), and Heather Peters (Missouri). The only original members still on the NWGLDE are Curt Johnson and Lamar Bradley. The only member who has been on the Work Group continuously since its inception is Curt Johnson, and to date has been the only Chair of the Work Group. ■

About the NWGLDE

The NWGLDE is an independent work group comprising eleven members, including ten state and one USEPA member. This column provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) the NWGLDE receives from regulators and people in the industry on leak detection. If you have questions for the group, contact them at questions@nwglde.org.

NWGLDE's Mission

- Review leak detection system evaluations to determine if each evaluation was performed in accordance with an acceptable leak detection test method protocol and ensure that the leak detection system meets EPA and/or other applicable regulatory performance standards.
- Review only draft and final leak detection test method protocols submitted to the work group by a peer review committee to ensure they meet equivalency standards stated in the U.S. EPA standard test procedures.
- Make the results of such reviews available to interested parties.

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**L.U.S.T.LINE
Index**

Aug. 1985/Bulletin #1 -
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