

FAQs from the NWGLDE

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

Unsupported Leak Detection Methods

In this LUSTLine FAQs from the National Work Group on Leak Detection Evaluations (NWGLDE), we discuss leak detection methods that are no longer supported by the company that markets them. Note: The views expressed in this column represent those of the work group and not necessarily those of any implementing agency.

Q. According to the NWGLDE website, [a certain company] is out of business. Given this circumstance, is this method still approved by the NWGLDE?

A. Before answering this question, we need to make it clear that the NWGLDE list is not a list of "approved" leak detection methods. Please review the disclaimer on our website at <http://www.nwglde.org/disclaimer.html>. The NWGLDE list is a compilation of methods that meet the criteria for being listed on our list; namely, a successfully completed third-party evaluation that is properly performed in accordance with a protocol that has been found to be acceptable to the NWGLDE.

Now, the answer to the question: Once a leak detection method has met the criteria for being listed, it remains on the list, even if the company is out of business or the company no longer provides support for the method. We do this because those who have purchased the leak detection method may still be using that method. To remove such a method from the NWGLDE list could create problems in states where the method is still in use, and only leak detection methods that are listed by the NWGLDE are allowed.

If a state has concerns about tank owners using listed leak detection methods that may no longer have support from the manufacturer, we suggest that the state develop a policy or regulation that would preclude tank owners from using such methods. (Please note: the NWGLDE does not get involved with the development of implementing agency policy or regulation.)

The NWGLDE depends on the company that markets a leak detection method to notify us of any changes. As we are made aware of corporate changes (e.g., companies being acquired by other companies, ceasing operation), this information is added to the NWGLDE list. However, this information will not always be on the listings, because we don't always receive this information. Even if we do receive the information, we may not be able to verify its accuracy.

Please be aware that even though a NWGLDE leak detection method listing indicates that a company is out of business, or that the equipment is no longer supported by the manufacturer, the method still has the potential to perform well without further support. Theoretically these unsupported methods could function indefinitely. However, as technology advances, some of these methods may encounter compatibility issues (new computer operating systems that will not run certain software, unavailability of replacement parts). In these scenarios, even though a leak detection method is still listed by the NWGLDE, the method will become obsolete, and another leak detection method will need to be used. ■

About the NWGLDE

The NWGLDE is an independent work group comprising ten members, including nine 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, please contact them at questions@nwglde.org.



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