

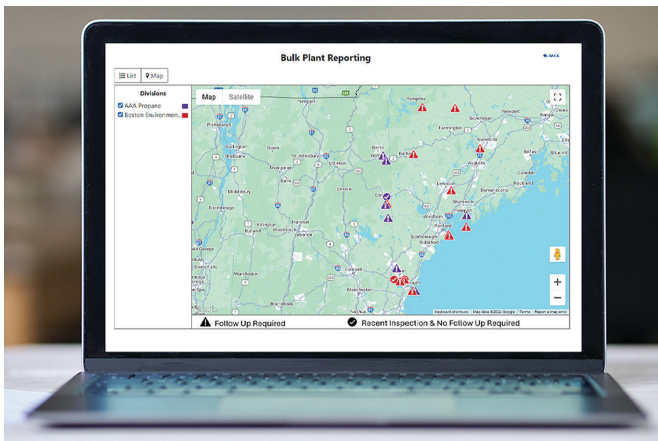


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The Six Most Common Issues Revealed in Bulk Plant Inspections

Maintaining regulatory compliance within bulk plants can be a challenge. That's why it's critical to have an inspection and maintenance process to help your facility and employees stay safe.

What are some of the most common inspection issues for bulk plants and how can they be resolved? Here are the top six inspection issues I frequently see during bulk plant inspections:



1. Emergency shut-offs don't work properly

The emergency shut-off valve (ESV) that closes the vapor and liquid valves to the container and piping in a bulk plant can experience many issues. These include not closing due to a lack of maintenance or getting stuck in the "Open" position because it was never routinely closed. Management at your bulk plants should verify the ESVs at least once per month to make sure they are in working order and no parts need to be replaced.

2. Lack of security

A bulk plant's security is only as good as its front gate, and far too often the gates at bulk plants are either left unlocked or fixed with "dummy" locks that look secure but aren't. I personally know of a propane marketer that left their bulk plant open only for a content creator to go in and film a video—not only is that dangerous, but it negatively impacts your brand's reputation. Locking gates at night and having secure fencing all the way around is one simple way to prevent bobtail theft, personal injury or worse.

3. Missing or faded markings and decals

Decals and markings at bulk plants may be something that you take for granted—after all, many are designed as permanent fixtures. However, over time, weather conditions and regular wear and tear can cause decals and markings to fade, creating a potential safety issue.

Replacing these markings and decals when they show signs of aging is an easy preventative measure to stay in compliance and provide new and seasoned HAZMAT handlers with the necessary information to keep safe.

4. Expired fire extinguishers

If the unthinkable were to happen at your bulk plant, one of the most important tools to have on hand is a fire extinguisher—but did you know that many extinguishers expire and are not requalified? Fire extinguishers should be inspected monthly and requalified or replaced if needed prior to their expiration date, so you know they'll work their best if you need them on your premises.

5. Methanol stored too close to the storage container

We all know that methanol should be stored in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area away from direct sunlight and moisture; however, it should also be kept a minimum of 20' from the point of transfer. Methanol stored too close to propane can spell trouble for your bulk plants, which is why it's important to check where your methanol is being stored and choose a new location if it is too close to a propane storage location.

6. Unsecured vapor and liquid hoses

Unsecured vapor and liquid hoses without the presence of a qualified individual can be a major issue at your bulk plants. Making sure that these hoses are only engaged in the presence of a representative can greatly reduce the risk of a catastrophe and keep you in compliance.

Find & Resolve Common Bulk Plant Issues

Paper safety inspections have been commonplace across the bulk storage industry for decades now, and some companies have moved toward using PDFs—but this time-consuming process is burdened by a host of drawbacks. There are many reasons why utilizing the latest technology plays a key role in better regulatory compliance than paper forms and PDFs.

Propane compliance experts now recommend digital routine bulk plant inspections to reduce the rate of omissions and errors within inspection reports and highlight any potential safety issues. Some platforms even automatically generate management reports, which can help identify important follow-ups.

To reduce your error rate and do your part in keeping your community and company safe, I highly recommend consulting a propane safety expert for assistance with your bulk plant inspections and reporting. **ICM**

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