

Fuel Storage Tanks... Convenience or Liability?

by Jack Lee, President/CEO, 4Refuel Inc.

Fuel storage tanks do eliminate some of the hassles associated with refuelling, but at the same time add a number of liabilities. First of all, fuel theft is a real problem. Security is the issue. Having thousands of litres of fuel on your property makes your storage tank easy prey for organized fuel thieves. These thugs prepare and plan to rip you off and there are many documented cases where these gangs have run away with thousands of dollars in fuel using fuel pumps. If you do not have tight security measures in place you could be at risk.

Another common type of fuel theft occurs every day when your employees help themselves to your fuel. It may have started innocently and could even be viewed as a perk of employment, but as fuel costs have escalated over the years any amount of fuel taken by employees hurts your business. If you don't regulate this type of theft, it can add up and cost you thousands of dollars in lost productivity, because after all, fuel is an investment. Besides, letting staff help themselves to fuel whenever they want delivers a message that you are not paying attention to the details. What else can they take?

When you open your storage tanks to staff do you know where all that fuel is going and to what piece of equipment? Ineffective tank monitoring is really just ineffective management. But today fuel can be measured and managed for a return on investment, just like any other cost associated with your business. For years fuel has flowed from storage tanks without accountability. There were no checks in place, other than a hand written docket with a rough estimate of how much fuel was pumped.

Another costly risk of storing all that fuel on your property is of course increased insurance

premiums. Unless you have state-of-the-art tanks and your people are completely trained on proper handling of hazardous goods, your insurance costs go up.

And how about all of the risks to the environment? If there is a fuel spill (and they do happen, whether the boss finds out or not) you are responsible for the expensive clean ups. If you have a major fuel spill because of negligence or faulty equipment, you may have a public relations debacle waiting to explode. The competition loves a good environmental neglect story!

But there is a better way to manage the monster: Total Fuel Management

OK, so now that you have a tainted picture of using fuel storage tanks, there is a better way to manage the monster. Total Fuel Management systems can give you peace of mind by eliminating theft and helping you measure and control your fuel consumption. Your Insurance Agent will be happy too because TFM eliminates the risks of refuelling.

Total Fuel Management companies will deliver fuel directly to your storage tank 24/7, usually while your equipment is parked for the day. Each time your equipment is led from the tank, the transaction is digitally monitored and detailed data is delivered to you on-line, including the date and time of the fuelling. Fuel theft can also be eliminated too, as tank monitors security alarms are activated whenever there is unauthorized refuelling.

One last point. TFM guarantees you will have the fuel you need so your storage tanks don't go dry, even in a regional fuel shortage. You keep working while your competitors wait for fuel, no hassles. ■

Nobody likes hassle. That's why many fuel-reliant companies made the decision to use on site fuel storage tanks. It made sense. There was the convenience of having the fuel you needed close at hand, no need to drive to a card lock, and access was of course 24/7. What could possibly go wrong? I'll tell you.

Jack Lee is CEO of 4Refuel – the largest onsite fuel management company in Canada and a global leader in technology designed to help businesses reduce their fuel expenses. Got a question about fuel? Ask the fuel expert by emailing Jack at AskTheFuelExpert@4Refuel.com

