

Taking Unnecessary Risks

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So... you're an inspector, you're at a gas station that has above ground tanks and how many times have you looked at the conditions around the tank and simply rolled your eyes. Many times, we as inspectors just roll with it and do things our HR Department would have a heart attack over. The problem with doing inspections this way puts us at a risk that is not necessary. Handbook 44 has a section that gives you, the inspector, the authority to require repairs, safety equipment or assistance if you feel it is needed.

Handbook 44 (2022 edition, page 1-13), **1.10. General Code**

G-UR.4.4. Assistance in Testing Operations. – *If the design, construction, or location of any device is such as to require a testing procedure involving special equipment or accessories or an abnormal amount of labor, such equipment, accessories, and labor shall be supplied by the owner or operator of the device as required by the weights and measures official.*

As we are all aware, in today's environment with staffing shortages and increasing amounts of devices, we sometimes feel we are under the gun to do more work at a faster pace just to keep our heads above water. As a result, we take shortcuts which seem beneficial in the moment, but may come back to bite us. Standing on that pile of cinder blocks, walking across decking that is ankle deep in leaves that may hide obstacles, climbing that old rickety ladder, stepping on rotted out steps or even standing on top of a Kerosene tank that is still wet from the morning dew. These are things we encounter every day that should be addressed before we attempt an unsafe action. Honestly, how many times have you done an inspection and said to yourself, "I'll give them one more year before I write up that violation" to only return the following year and say, "I'll give them one more year". If you feel that something is unsafe, don't be afraid to require the business to have the item repaired or have someone assist you with your drain back. Considering that a 5-gallon prover weighs in at 42 lbs. with gasoline, 47 lbs. with diesel/kerosene and now 57 lbs. with DEF, it is imperative to make sure the gas station has a safe structure for you to stand on to perform your inspection. When testing DEF, you might be pouring back into a 55-gallon drum like we do in Delaware which would require you to have to lift that awkward 57 lb. prover to shoulder height or even higher depending on your height to properly make your drain into your funnel. This is where common sense and following safety guidelines comes into play. In the past, there have been several articles on the proper techniques for safe lifting (2014 Issue #1, 2019 Issue #3, 2020 Issue #2 and 2021 Issue #1). Those articles have great suggestions and insight on how to safely perform your duties. You may want to consider having extra equipment with you such as a sturdy step ladder to use when you plan on doing certain inspections. Take your time and be safe instead of rushing. The two minutes you save by being impatient may cost you a lifetime of regret if you were to have an injury. Though these are the risks associated with our occupation, no job or amount of money is worth our health and safety.

