



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

May 28, 2021

Mr. Vignesh Pandurengan
Maintenance Specialist
Stabilis Solutions
10375 Richmond Avenue, Suite 700
Houston, TX 77042

Reference No. 20-0094

Dear Mr. Pandurengan:

This is in response to your December 7, 2020, email and subsequent conversations with a member of my staff requesting clarification of the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 CFR Parts 171-180) applicable to Department of Transportation (DOT) cargo tanks. Specifically, you ask whether an insulated MC 338 cargo tank transporting non-corrosive materials and equipped with manholes must undergo an internal visual inspection within certain time intervals.

Section 180.407(c) exempts DOT Specification MC 338 cargo tanks from the internal visual inspection requirement when transporting non-corrosive materials. However, MC 338 cargo tanks are required to be externally inspected annually. If the insulation of the MC 338 cargo tank you describe is found to preclude a complete external inspection, an internal inspection of the cargo tank would be required in order to meet the external inspection requirements specified in §§ 180.407(c) and 180.407(d). In addition, because the cargo tank you describe is equipped with manholes, Note 4 of § 180.407(c) would apply, and you may perform either an internal visual inspection in conjunction with the external visual inspection or a hydrostatic or pneumatic pressure-test of the cargo tank.

I hope this information is helpful. Please contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T. Glenn Foster".

T. Glenn Foster
Chief, Regulatory Review and Reinvention Branch
Standards and Rulemaking Division

From: [INFOCNTR \(PHMSA\)](#)
To: [Dodd, Alice \(PHMSA\)](#); [Hazmat Interps](#)
Subject: FW: Request for Letter of Interpretation
Date: Monday, December 7, 2020 11:58:24 AM

Dear Alice,

Please see the request for a letter of interpretation below. Please contact our office with any questions.

Thank you,

Sarah (HMIC)

From: Vignesh Pandurengan [mailto:vpandurengan@stabilis-solutions.com]
Sent: Monday, December 7, 2020 8:37 AM
To: INFOCNTR (PHMSA) <INFOCNTR.INFOCNTR@dot.gov>
Cc: Mirosław Skrzypkowski <Mskrzypkowski@stabilis-solutions.com>; Travis Vandervort <tvandervort@stabilis-solutions.com>; Koby Knight <koby.knight@stabilisenergy.com>; Jessica Lopez <jessica.lopez@stabilis-solutions.com>; Crystal Alcalar <crystal.alcalar@stabilis-solutions.com>
Subject: Request for Letter of Interpretation

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to request a letter of interpretation of the regulation that defines internal visual inspection requirements of MC338s tanks that have manholes/manways. I spoke with a regulatory specialist, Breanna, who was very thorough and escalated the question of whether or not MC338s tanks that have manholes/manways are required to have internal visual inspections at ANY interval of time to other specialists and to personnel at the PHMSA Standards department. She got back to me and reported that MC338 units with manholes/manways are NOT required by the CFR to have internal inspections but we may do so at our own discretion.

The portions of the regulation that define the inspection requirements are 49 CFR 180.407 in the sections shown below:

Test or inspection (cargo tank specification, configuration, and service)	Date by which first test must be completed (see Note 1)	Interval period after first test
External Visual Inspection:		
All cargo tanks designed to be loaded by vacuum with full opening rear heads	September 1, 1991	6 months.
All other cargo tanks	September 1, 1991	1 year.
Internal Visual Inspection:		
All insulated cargo tanks, except MC 330, MC 331, MC 338 (see Note 4)	September 1, 1991	1 year.
All cargo tanks transporting lading corrosive to the tank	September 1, 1991	1 year.
MC 331 cargo tanks less than 3,500 gallons water capacity in dedicated propane service constructed of nonquenched and tempered NQT SA-612 steel (see Note 5)		10 years.
All other cargo tanks, except MC 338	September 1, 1995	5 years.
Lining Inspection:		
All lined cargo tanks transporting lading corrosive to the tank	September 1, 1991	1 year.
Leakage Test:		
MC 330 and MC 331 cargo tanks in chlorine service	September 1, 1991	2 years.
All other cargo tanks except MC 338	September 1, 1991	1 year.
Pressure Test:		
(Hydrostatic or pneumatic) (See Notes 2 and 3)		
All cargo tanks which are insulated with no manhole or insulated and lined, except MC 338	September 1, 1991	1 year.
All cargo tanks designed to be loaded by vacuum with full opening rear heads	September 1, 1992	2 years.
MC 330 and MC 331 cargo tanks in chlorine service	September 1, 1992	2 years.
MC 331 cargo tanks less than 3,500 gallons water capacity in dedicated propane service constructed of nonquenched and tempered NQT SA-612 steel (See Note 5)		10 years.
All other cargo tanks	September 1, 1995	5 years.

Note 4: Insulated cargo tanks equipped with manholes or inspection openings may perform either an internal visual inspection in conjunction with the external visual inspection or a hydrostatic or pneumatic pressure-test of the cargo tank.

(g) *Pressure test.* All components of the cargo tank wall, as defined in §178.320(a) of this subchapter, must be pressure tested as prescribed by this paragraph.

(1) *Test Procedure—(i)* As part of the pressure test, the inspector must perform an external and internal visual inspection, except that on an MC 338 cargo tank, or a cargo tank not equipped with a manhole or inspection opening, an internal inspection is not required.

Please provide a formal interpretation letter for our confirmation and review at your earliest convenience, the physical mailing address to which the letter can be sent is in my signature below.

Regards,

Vignesh Pandurengan

Maintenance Specialist
Stabilis Solutions

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