

TANK ASSURANCE FEE INCREASES

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Board reviews its rules to determine if any updates or changes are appropriate. Part of this review includes the development of financial projections to determine the adequacy of fees to meet anticipated expenditures and long-term liability of the Fund. As in the past several years, claims for reimbursement continue to be significant. The Fund reimbursed over \$10 million in the past year, but it received over \$14 million in new claims during this same time period. This imbalance continues to be a source of concern for the Board and the driver for fee increases.

The Board has projected claims payments of \$9 million for the 2006 and 2007 program years and \$8 million for the 2008 program year. In order to meet those projections and other obligations of the Fund associated with the debt retirement of bonds, the Board has taken steps to amend 3737-1-04 of the Ohio Administrative Code to increase the tank fee by \$50 to \$600 per year (with a \$55,000 deductible). In addition, the Board has also taken steps to increase the fee to buy down the deductible for the first time since the Fund's inception. The fee for the reduced deductible (\$11,000) has always been an additional \$150 per tank. The Board is amending 3737-1-06 of the Ohio Administrative Code to increase the fee for the reduced deductible to \$200. This will make the upcoming 2006 program year's reduced deductible fee \$800 per tank. **Only owners of six or fewer tanks may elect the reduced deductible option.** Both fee increases will start with the July 1, 2006 program year.

2006 PROGRAM YEAR FEES WILL BE:

\$600 PER TANK FOR COVERAGE AT THE \$55,000 DEDUCTIBLE

\$800 PER TANK FOR COVERAGE AT THE \$11,000 DEDUCTIBLE

HARDSHIP APPLICATION AMENDMENTS BROADEN FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES

The Board has amended 3737-1-08 of the Ohio Administrative Code, the rule regarding hardship applications. The hardship application process allows a tank owner to receive accelerated claim review and payments if he can demonstrate an inability to finance clean up costs. The amendments clarify and broaden the documentation required of tank owners in submitting hardship applications. Ultimately, they will assist the Board in assessing an applicant's ability to finance corrective action costs. The amendments will also allow the Board to suspend or discontinue the hardship program if doing so is in the interest of the Fund.

IMPORTANT TANK REGISTRATION REMINDER

In addition to assuring your tanks with the Board, you must renew your tank registration with the Bureau of Underground Storage Tank Regulations (BUSTR) by July 1, 2006. Private entities must pay annual registration fees. Although public entities are exempt from BUSTR tank registration fees, they must still renew their BUSTR registration annually. Tanks may be registered online at <https://www.com.state.oh.us/sfm/bustr/OnLineOffice.asp> or by calling 614-752-7126 for information. Failure to register your tanks with BUSTR by July 1, 2006 may result in the denial of your Certificate of Coverage from the Board.

Remember, registering a tank with BUSTR is a separate requirement from paying tank assurance fees to the Board and completing the Board's assurability application.