

# Guidelines and Procedures for Entering and Cleaning Petroleum Storage Tanks

ANSI/API RECOMMENDED PRACTICE 2016  
FIRST EDITION, AUGUST 2001



**American  
Petroleum  
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## FOREWORD

This recommended practice was prepared under the auspices of the API Safety and Fire Protection Subcommittee. It is provided for the use of API member companies and others in the development and implementation of company and facility specific safe practices for planning, managing, and conducting tank cleaning operations in petroleum storage tanks.

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# Guidelines and Procedures for Entering and Cleaning Petroleum Storage Tanks

## 1 General

### 1.1 SCOPE

ANSI/API Recommended Practice 2016, First Edition, *Guidelines and Procedures for Entering and Cleaning Petroleum Storage Tanks*, supplements the requirements of ANSI/API Standard 2015, Sixth Edition, *Requirements for Safe Entry and Cleaning of Petroleum Storage Tanks*. This recommended practice provides guidance and information on the specific aspects of tank cleaning, in order to assist employers (owners/operators and contractors) to conduct safe tank cleaning operations in accordance with the requirements of ANSI/API Standard 2015.

### 1.2 APPLICABILITY

This recommended practice is applicable to stationary atmospheric and low-pressure (up to and including 15 psig) aboveground petroleum storage tanks, used in all sectors of the petroleum and petrochemical industry, including crude oil and gas production, refineries, petrochemical plants, bulk plants, and terminals. Information applicable to entering and cleaning conservation tanks, low pressure storage tanks, and vessels and tanks containing specific hazardous substances is also included in this recommended practice. Employers (owners/operators and contractors) should use the information provided in this recommended practice to help develop the site, tank, and project specific guidelines and procedures required by ANSI/API Standard 2015 to ensure that the tank cleaning operations are conducted safely.

This recommended practice does not and cannot cover every possible unique situation that may arise during tank cleaning operations. Employers (owner/operators and contractors) shall use the appropriate principles and requirements provided in ANSI/API Standard 2015, supplemented by the practices, procedures, and considerations provided in ANSI/API Recommended Practice 2016, to address site specific and tank specific situations.

### 1.3 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the requirements contained in ANSI/API Standard 2015, persons engaged in tank cleaning activities shall refer to applicable federal, state and local government regulations pertinent to specific circumstances, including regulations of governments other than those of the United States, where appropriate. ANSI/API Recommended Practice 2016 is intended to be consistent with Title 29 of the U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations*, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and applicable NFPA Codes and Standards as they

apply to entering and cleaning aboveground petroleum storage tanks. If any provision of this recommended practice conflicts with statutory or regulatory requirements, said statutes and regulations shall govern. This recommended practice is not intended to function as a substitute for applicable regulations, codes, standards or employer (owner/operator and contractor) safe work practices and guidelines which must be reviewed in their entirety to determine their applicability to the facility, its location, the tanks involved and the proposed work.

### 1.4 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES

In accordance with the requirements of ANSI/API Standard 2015, employers (owners, operators or contractors) shall develop and implement appropriate administrative controls, procedures, and written plans for tank preparation, entry, and cleaning operations from decommissioning through recommissioning, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Tank pre-cleaning planning and meeting.
- Storage tank, area, atmospheric, physical and product hazard assessments.
- Entry permit requirements, limitations, issuance and cancellation.
- Identification, designation and classification by the employer of permit required confined spaces, non-permit required confined spaces and non-confined spaces.
- Entry requirements for each designated confined space.
- Safe (cold) work and hot work permit requirements.
- Vapor and gas freeing, degassing, testing, and ventilation requirements.
- Training and personal protective equipment requirements for workers and supervisors.
- Emergency response requirements, rescue operations and rescue capability.
- Contractor selection and responsibilities.
- Owner/operator responsibilities.
- Tank cleaning procedures, equipment and sludge/residue disposal.
- Regulatory and facility requirements applicable to tank cleaning operations.