

CHAPTER 115C

PETROLEUM TANK RELEASE CLEANUP

115C.021 Responsible person.
115C.08 Petroleum tank fund.

115C.09 Reimbursement.

115C.021 RESPONSIBLE PERSON.

Subdivision 1. General rule. Except as provided in subdivisions 2 to 4, a person is responsible for a release from a tank if the person is an owner or operator of the tank at any time during or after the release.

[For text of subs 2 to 4, see M.S.1998]

History: 1999 c 86 art 1 s 23

115C.08 PETROLEUM TANK FUND.

[For text of subs 1 to 3, see M.S.1998]

Subd. 4. Expenditures. (a) Money in the fund may only be spent:

(1) to administer the petroleum tank release cleanup program established in this chapter;

(2) for agency administrative costs under sections 116.46 to 116.50, sections 115C.03 to 115C.06, and costs of corrective action taken by the agency under section 115C.03, including investigations;

(3) for costs of recovering expenses of corrective actions under section 115C.04;

(4) for training, certification, and rulemaking under sections 116.46 to 116.50;

(5) for agency administrative costs of enforcing rules governing the construction, installation, operation, and closure of aboveground and underground petroleum storage tanks;

(6) for reimbursement of the harmful substance compensation account under subdivision 5 and section 115B.26, subdivision 4;

(7) for administrative and staff costs as set by the board to administer the petroleum tank release program established in this chapter;

(8) for corrective action performance audits under section 115C.093; and

(9) for contamination cleanup grants, as provided in paragraph (c).

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (c), money in the fund is appropriated to the board to make reimbursements or payments under this section.

(c) \$6,200,000 is annually appropriated from the fund to the commissioner of trade and economic development for contamination cleanup grants under section 116J.554. Of this amount, the commissioner may spend up to \$120,000 annually for administration of the contamination cleanup grant program. The appropriation does not cancel and is available until expended. The appropriation shall not be withdrawn from the fund nor the fund balance reduced until the funds are requested by the commissioner of trade and economic development. The commissioner shall schedule requests for withdrawals from the fund to minimize the necessity to impose the fee authorized by subdivision 2. Unless otherwise provided, the appropriation in this paragraph may be used for:

(1) project costs at a qualifying site if a portion of the cleanup costs are attributable to petroleum contamination; and

(2) the costs of performing contamination investigation if there is a reasonable basis to suspect the contamination is attributable to petroleum.

[For text of subd 5, see M.S.1998]

History: 1999 c 203 s 1

115C.09 REIMBURSEMENT.

[For text of subs 1 to 2a, see M.S.1998]

Subd. 3. Reimbursements; subrogation; appropriation. (a) The board shall reimburse an eligible applicant from the fund in the following amounts:

(1) 90 percent of the total reimbursable costs on the first \$250,000 and 75 percent on any remaining costs in excess of \$250,000 on a site;

(2) for corrective actions at a residential site used as a permanent residence at the time the release was discovered, 92.5 percent of the total reimbursable costs on the first \$100,000 and 100 percent of any remaining costs in excess of \$100,000; or

(3) 90 percent of the total reimbursable costs on the first \$250,000 and 100 percent of the cumulative total reimbursable costs in excess of \$250,000 at all sites in which the responsible person had interest, and for which the commissioner has not issued a closure letter as of April 3, 1996, if the responsible person dispensed less than 1,000,000 gallons of petroleum at each location in each of the last three calendar years that the responsible person dispensed petroleum at the location and:

(i) has owned no more than three locations in the state at which motor fuel was dispensed into motor vehicles and has discontinued operation of all petroleum retail operations; or

(ii) has owned no more than one location in the state at which motor fuel was dispensed into motor vehicles.

Not more than \$1,000,000 may be reimbursed for costs associated with a single release, regardless of the number of persons eligible for reimbursement, and not more than \$2,000,000 may be reimbursed for costs associated with a single tank facility.

(b) A reimbursement may not be made from the fund under this chapter until the board has determined that the costs for which reimbursement is requested were actually incurred and were reasonable.

(c) When an applicant has obtained responsible competitive bids or proposals according to rules promulgated under this chapter prior to June 1, 1995, the eligible costs for the tasks, procedures, services, materials, equipment, and tests of the low bid or proposal are presumed to be reasonable by the board, unless the costs of the low bid or proposal are substantially in excess of the average costs charged for similar tasks, procedures, services, materials, equipment, and tests in the same geographical area during the same time period.

(d) When an applicant has obtained a minimum of two responsible competitive bids or proposals on forms prescribed by the board and where the rules promulgated under this chapter after June 1, 1995, designate maximum costs for specific tasks, procedures, services, materials, equipment and tests, the eligible costs of the low bid or proposal are deemed reasonable if the costs are at or below the maximums set forth in the rules.

(e) Costs incurred for change orders executed as prescribed in rules promulgated under this chapter after June 1, 1995, are presumed reasonable if the costs are at or below the maximums set forth in the rules, unless the costs in the change order are above those in the original bid or proposal or are unsubstantiated and inconsistent with the process and standards required by the rules.

(f) A reimbursement may not be made from the fund in response to either an initial or supplemental application for costs incurred after June 4, 1987, that are payable under an applicable insurance policy, except that if the board finds that the applicant has made reasonable efforts to collect from an insurer and failed, the board shall reimburse the applicant.

(g) If the board reimburses an applicant for costs for which the applicant has insurance coverage, the board is subrogated to the rights of the applicant with respect to that insurance coverage, to the extent of the reimbursement by the board. The board may request the attorney general to bring an action in district court against the insurer to enforce the board's subrogation rights. Acceptance by an applicant of reimbursement constitutes an assignment by the applicant to the board of any rights of the applicant with respect to any insurance coverage applicable to the costs that are reimbursed. Notwithstanding this paragraph, the board may instead request a return of the reimbursement under subdivision 5 and may employ

against the applicant the remedies provided in that subdivision, except where the board has knowingly provided reimbursement because the applicant was denied coverage by the insurer.

(h) Money in the fund is appropriated to the board to make reimbursements under this chapter. A reimbursement to a state agency must be credited to the appropriation account or accounts from which the reimbursed costs were paid.

(i) The board may reduce the amount of reimbursement to be made under this chapter if it finds that the applicant has not complied with a provision of this chapter, a rule or order issued under this chapter, or one or more of the following requirements:

- (1) the agency was given notice of the release as required by section 115.061;
- (2) the applicant, to the extent possible, fully cooperated with the agency in responding to the release;
- (3) the state rules applicable after December 22, 1993, to operating an underground storage tank and appurtenances without leak detection;
- (4) the state rules applicable after December 22, 1998, to operating an underground storage tank and appurtenances without corrosion protection or spill and overfill protection; and
- (5) the state rule applicable after November 1, 1998, to operating an aboveground tank without a dike or other structure that would contain a spill at the aboveground tank site.

(j) The reimbursement may be reduced as much as 100 percent for failure by the applicant to comply with the requirements in paragraph (i), clauses (1) to (5). In determining the amount of the reimbursement reduction, the board shall consider:

- (1) the reasonable determination by the agency that the noncompliance poses a threat to the environment;
- (2) whether the noncompliance was negligent, knowing, or willful;
- (3) the deterrent effect of the award reduction on other tank owners and operators;
- (4) the amount of reimbursement reduction recommended by the commissioner; and
- (5) the documentation of noncompliance provided by the commissioner.

(k) An applicant may assign the right to receive reimbursement to each lender who advanced funds to pay the costs of the corrective action or to each contractor or consultant who provided corrective action services. An assignment must be made by filing with the board a document, in a form prescribed by the board, indicating the identity of the applicant, the identity of the assignee, the dollar amount of the assignment, and the location of the corrective action. An assignment signed by the applicant is valid unless terminated by filing a termination with the board, in a form prescribed by the board, which must include the written concurrence of the assignee. The board shall maintain an index of assignments filed under this paragraph. The board shall pay the reimbursement to the applicant and to one or more assignees by a multiparty check. The board has no liability to an applicant for a payment under an assignment meeting the requirements of this paragraph.

[For text of subs 3a to 3g, see M.S.1998]

Subd. 3h. Reimbursement; aboveground tanks in bulk plants. (a) As used in this subdivision, "bulk plant" means an aboveground or underground tank facility with a storage capacity of more than 1,100 gallons but less than 1,000,000 gallons that is used to dispense petroleum into cargo tanks for transportation and sale at another location.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision in this chapter and any rules adopted pursuant to this chapter, the board shall reimburse 90 percent of an applicant's cost for bulk plant upgrades or closures completed between June 1, 1998, and November 1, 2003, to comply with Minnesota Rules, chapter 7151, provided that the board determines the costs were incurred and reasonable. The reimbursement may not exceed \$10,000 per bulk plant.

[For text of subs 4 to 10, see M.S.1998]

History: 1999 c 203 s 2,3