

**Subject:** Diesel Fuel Complaint I-90 Travel Plaza, Mitchell  
**From:** <David.Pfahler@state.sd.us>  
**Date:** 7/31/2012 3:53 PM  
**To:** <bennf@nsfd.net>  
**CC:** <Lynn.Bixler@state.sd.us>, <Ron.Werner@state.sd.us>

Mr. Benn:

We checked tank #5 for the presence of water on July 30 at 10 am. Our probe identified 5.5 inches of water in the tank. The in-tank monitors for this tank identified 2.27 inches of water (49.03 gallons) on July 30 and 2.20 inches of water (46.74 gallons) on June 12. The in-tank results are attached. It is not unusual to have some water in a tank. It is not unusual to have our readings from the probe differ from the in-tank monitor results. The guidance we use for how much water is acceptable in a tank comes from NIST Handbook 130 – *Uniform Laws and Regulations in the Areas of Legal Metrology and Engine Fuel Quality*:

**4.1. Water in Gasoline-Alcohol Blends, Aviation Gas, and Aviation Turbine Fuel.** -- No water phase greater than 6 mm (1/4 in) as determined by an appropriate detection paste, is allowed to accumulate in any tank utilized in the storage of gasoline-alcohol blend, aviation gasoline, and aviation turbine fuel.

**4.2. Water in Gasoline, Diesel, Gasoline-Ether, and Other Fuels.** -- Water shall not exceed 50 mm (2 in) in depth when measured with water indicating paste in any tank utilized in the storage of biodiesel, diesel, gasoline, gasoline-ether blends, and kerosene sold at retail except as required in § 4.1.

According to our Inspector, the manager was aware of this complaint and had referred it to his home office. I personally spoke to the manager who indicated that they have had no other complaints. He also contends that he personally fuels from this tank; nevertheless, I instructed him to take this fuel out of service until the water problem could be addressed. Even though they may have received no other complaints, they have sufficient water in the tank to potentially cause problems under the right circumstances. Those circumstances might include fueling immediately after a drop of fuel into the tank that could stir up the contents from the bottom of the tank.

Thank you for bringing this problem to our attention. You can be assured that we will follow up with the Travel Plaza to ensure that they are addressing the problem.

David L. Pfahler, Director  
Inspections/ Weights & Measures Programs  
SD Department of Public Safety  
118 West Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 773-4091

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**From:** Frank Benn [<mailto:bennf@nsfd.net>]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 27, 2012 2:42 PM  
**To:** Bixler, Lynn  
**Cc:** Pfahler, David  
**Subject:** Fuel Inspection

Ms. Bixler,

In response to Mr. Pfahler's email reply, I am attaching a document scan. The first page contains a copy of the receipt from the I-90 Travel Plaza Shell station in Mitchell, SD. I don't see a clear indication of the pump number, but we used the diesel pump closest to the station also on the side closest to the station.

If you can get someone to check the contents of that tank it might save someone else from the financial disaster that

visited us during our vacation this summer.

Thanks for your time,

Frank Benn  
Firefighter/EMT/Engineer  
N. S. F. D.  
Weidman, MI 48893

On 7/27/2012 8:48 AM, [David.Pfahler@state.sd.us](mailto:David.Pfahler@state.sd.us) wrote:

Mr. Benn

This could be a problem with water in the tank based on the photo. We need more information such as station name, product type, and pump number if possible. Please copy Lynn Bixleron you reply since I am out of state.

David Pfahler

**From:** Frank Benn [[bennf@nsfd.net](mailto:bennf@nsfd.net)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 25, 2012 7:45 PM  
**To:** Pfahler, David  
**Subject:** Fuel Inspection

Mr. Pfahler,

I'm looking for the department responsible for testing fuel at filling stations for contamination. In July, I purchased 19 gallons of diesel fuel at a station in Mitchell, SD. About 270 miles farther west, my truck engine stopped running. We had to have the truck and travel trailer towed and spent nearly a week in a nearby campground waiting for over \$9,000 in repairs to be made to our truck.

The station management has ignored my correspondence and I have yet to hear from Shell. I'm concerned that the contamination still exists in that underground tank and that other people are having problems because of it.

If your department is not responsible for testing fuel in filling station tanks, please point me in the right direction.

Thanks for your time,

Frank Benn  
Firefighter, EMT, Engineer  
N.S.F.D.  
Weidman, MI 48893



—Attachments:—

Bad\_Fuel\_Docs\_Shell\_Email.pdf

5.7 MB

Ron SD265.pdf

123 KB