

For Immediate Release

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A Clean Slate

World Trade Center site contractors switch to Transcube fuel tanks to avoid fuel spills.

NEW YORK — When Hank Berberat arrives at a typical construction site, he doesn't usually observe random bystanders trying to enter the gates right behind him, attempting to sneak a peek at what's going on inside. But when the construction project in question is New York City's World Trade Center (WTC) Memorial, one can understand why the general public may have an above-average level of curiosity.

In a way, the high-profile nature of the WTC Memorial is a big reason Berberat became involved with the site in the first place. Berberat is the owner of Berco Tank, a Watertown, Connecticut-based company specializing in fuel storage tank rentals and sales. "Our focus is on tanks that offer secondary containment," said Berberat, who's been in the fuel tank business for 20 years. "Sometimes customers need tanks for hazardous materials, but primarily they're using them for fuel supply for their machines."

At present, the process of fueling excavators, dozers and other construction vehicles at the WTC Memorial site is not as simple as driving up to a pump at the local gas station, given that many of these machines are performing excavation and foundation work in a hole 85 feet deep. These logistics leave only one viable option for equipment fueling — using cranes to lower fuel tanks from grade level down to the bottom of the hole.

Traditional diesel storage tanks are not designed to be moved while full of fuel. As a result, many contractors will hire local welding shops or bring in their own fabricators to modify these types of tanks with eye hooks or other features that enable the tanks to be hoisted by crane. Such was the case with several tanks at the WTC site.

“Nine out of ten times a modified tank might do the job just fine,” said Berberat. “But it can be problematic because generally there’s no real engineering involved. It’s usually just a guy in a shop making adjustments to where it appears to be a structurally sound unit.”

Unfortunately, in October of 2008, possibly due to inadequately spaced eye hooks or some similar engineering failure, a modified tank on the site was unable to contain a fuel surge as it was being moved, causing a significant amount of diesel fuel to be spilled. Needless to say, this incident immediately brought some serious environmental and safety concerns to light — concerns that would be critical under any circumstance, but even more so at a job under as much scrutiny as the WTC Memorial.

Feeling like they were on the hot seat — and rightfully so — it didn’t take long for various contractors at the site to seek out more a reliable option for fuel storage and transport. “They needed a tank that was legally certified to be lifted with fuel inside,” said Berberat. “And they need fuel there everyday so they had to come up with an answer quickly. I got a phone call and told them about a product that would fit the bill.”

It had been only a month prior that Berberat himself had successfully located such a solution. When founding Berco Tank in September 2008, Berberat was looking for a unique line of fuel tanks to help differentiate his new company from the competition. His search led him to Western International, Inc. and their line of Transcube fuel transportation tanks.

Featuring internal baffling to minimize fuel surge while in transit, Transcube tanks are UL 142 approved and compliant with U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) standards for road transport of diesel fuel. The units are designed around the concept of preventing any occurrence of fuel spilling or leakage, built with an inner tank completely enclosed within an outer wall structure that provides 110-percent secondary containment.

“Being able to transport a container while it still has fuel in it is a significant advantage,” said Berberat, whose fleet has now grown to include 13 Transcube tanks. “Standard tanks have to be emptied, but sometimes even with good planning there’s fuel left over. In one instance a local

fuel company was delivering one of my rental Transcubes full of diesel to a jobsite everyday. Because of site constraints and safety concerns, the contractors didn't want the tank sitting there while they worked, so the fuel company immediately took it off site after it had fueled the equipment. The Transcube made that arrangement possible.”

Transcube tanks look like the name implies – they are rectangular in shape like a box. In fact, the shape even allows tanks to be stacked on top of one another to save space in rental yards or cramped jobsites. Obviously with traditional, round fuel tanks this can't be accomplished.

In addition to the basic product qualifications, Berberat was able to provide contractors at the WTC Memorial with ratings testing information that further satisfied officials monitoring the site. Contractors also had a chance to view demonstration images of a Transcube being lifted and dropped without incident, obviously another key selling point on a jobsite where cranes were constantly lifting tanks up and out of a deep hole.

The use of Transcube units on the project started with two companies, one of which purchased its tanks from Berco Tank while the other rented. As word spread — to contractors and site authorities alike — several other contractors, many of whom had used their own tanks for years, made the change to Transcube.

“Some companies decided to use Transcube even though they aren't moving their fuel,” said Berberat. “They're taking a proactive approach to make sure they don't have any issues with inspectors down the road. All told, there are 10 different companies using our tanks at the site.”

Berco Tank has supplied 16 fuel storage tanks to those 10 companies. Eight units are currently out on rental on the project and eight more have been purchased to this point. Among the 16 Transcube tanks, three different models have been utilized, with those models offering capacities of 132, 264 and 528 gallons, respectively.

According to Berberat, user feedback has been very positive, with most comments centering on the ease of handling a Transcube in comparison to the cumbersome nature of round tanks. The

tanks have full-load eye hooks on all four corners and forklift pockets on all four sides, meaning the tanks can be moved and placed to and from almost any position on the jobsite.

The versatility and functional design of the tanks have also been noted. Contractors have been able to use a tank's fuel pump while simultaneously using feed and return lines to provide fuel to generators and heaters. Furthermore, the pump and line connections are all located within a lockable cabinet. In addition to providing security against fuel theft, the cabinet keeps everything protected from the outside weather elements.

While the clear motivation in initially seeking out a new tank solution was containment of fuel during transport, contractors have also seen the units prevent some of the incidental messes associated with fuel tank use. "Handling fuels is typically a messy scenario when you're taking hoses on and off and that sort of thing," said Berberat. "With Transcube everything is contained within the cabinet so you've just got a much cleaner situation."

Most of Berco's Transcube units are expected to remain on duty for the duration of the WTC Memorial project, which is slated for completion by 2013. By then the tanks will have long since stopped going down into a hole, and instead will be in the habit of traveling upward — as the buildings on site grow story by story. There's much work to left to be done, but with the proper transport equipment on hand, WTC contractors can rest assured that cleaning up after another fuel spill won't be part of the job.

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