

FATALGRAM 19-01

Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Division of Labor & Safety Standards
Occupational Safety & Health



Date of incident: March 12, 2019

Industry: Gas Stations

Location: Soldotna, Alaska

Summary: A gas station attendant was attempting to rid a sump tank of water accumulation. During the process, he slid head first into the sump tank, and became stuck. He succumbed to positional asphyxiation before emergency services arrived.

Description of Accident: A 32-year-old male, working as a gas station attendant, was attempting to pump the water out of an underground sump tank. It contained fuel lines that run from the underground fuel storage tanks to the gas pumps and the electronics that control the gas pumps. When water levels reach a certain height, an alarm sounds to protect the electronics. When the alarm sounds, the water must be removed from the sump to avoid damage to equipment. The victim was laying on the ground using a shop-vac to remove water from the sump. There were no witnesses however, at some point during the operation, the victim slid head first into the sump. He was pinned head down between the piping and the wall of the sump. First responders arrived and attempted resuscitation, but were unsuccessful.

Accident Prevention Recommendations:

- Establish and implement an effective confined space program, and ensure all affected employees are trained.
- Establish and implement an effective, written, hazard communication program detailing the dangers and requirements for working with all chemicals on site, in particular diesel and gasoline.
- Ensure workers performing dangerous tasks have constant communication with another worker. Either buddy system, radios, or some other effective means of communication.
- Hire qualified contractors to perform any dangerous tasks that employees are not qualified or trained to do.