

Unified Program Newsletter – March 2022

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CalEPA

[CERS Knowledge Base, Help Articles and FAQs](https://cers.calepa.ca.gov/newsletter-articles)

(<https://cers.calepa.ca.gov/newsletter-articles>)

Revision to February 2022’s CERS Regulator Portal Help Newsletter Article

After receiving valuable feedback from our CERS community, CalEPA’s CERS Technical Support Team has updated the Help guidance document regarding [Merging facilities in the CERS Regulator Portal](#).

(<https://cers.calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2022/02/CERS-Regulator-Portal-Help-Merging-Duplicate-Facilities.pdf>)

Hazardous Materials Business Plan and California Accidental Release Prevention Programs Moved to CalEPA

On July 22, 2021, Assembly Bill 148 transferred state program oversight authority and responsibilities for the Hazardous Materials Business Plan program, including Area Plan requirements, and for the California Accidental Release Prevention program, from the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) to CalEPA. CalEPA is now responsible for evaluating and providing technical assistance for these programs. More program specific information will be posted to our webpages shortly.

For general questions and information regarding the Hazardous Materials Business Plan program and Area Plan requirements please contact: HMBP@calepa.ca.gov.

For general questions and information regarding the California Accidental Release Prevention program please contact: CalARP@calepa.ca.gov.

EPA ID Verification

Background

Facility Activity information in the California Environmental Report System (CERS) triggers the manual entry of an EPA ID when the facility generates and/or stores hazardous waste. CERS was not designed to validate or verify EPA ID numbers, resulting in a significant amount of invalid and missing data. Poor data quality is impacting the ability of CalEPA to compile and send compliance, monitoring, and enforcement (CME) data to other systems. To address this, a tool to validate this data against the EPA ID system of record, hazardous waste tracking system (HWTS), was developed and is almost completed.

The tool design is sophisticated and uses many attributes of the facility name and location to match with data from HWTS. The facility name and address from CERS will be used to determine if there is an EPA ID number in HWTS. If the EPA ID matches between the two systems, CERS will automatically verify, and no action will be required. If there is not a definitive match, CERS will prompt section from a list of five potential options. In those cases where a definitive match cannot be found, or where the address is unusable, the facility will be directed to their UPA. In testing, the new function is successful about 95 percent of the time.

Impacts

Facilities with an EPA ID that is not a definitive match against HWTS will be required to verify their EPA ID number in CERS.

Once the new EPA ID verification process is implemented, the EPA ID field will not be editable on the Business Activities form.

In those cases where a match cannot be found or where the address is unusable, the facility will be directed to their CUPA for assistance.

A facility generating hazardous waste will not be able to submit to CERS without a verified EPA ID from HWTS.

The majority of updates to CERS occur with the annual EPCRA filing or the triennial HMBP filing. Implementation has been scheduled after the January and February updates where a large volume occurs each year to reduce the initial impact and to provide significant lead time for corrections.

What is Next

Guidance will be provided on the new tool to both UPAs and facilities prior to implementation. **The tool is anticipated to be incorporated into CERS in May this year.**

CUPA/PA Boundary Layer

Background

CalEPA oversees the statewide implementation of the Unified Program and its 81 certified local agencies (58 counties and 23 cities). Currently there is not a geospatial dataset for the CUPA and PA jurisdictional boundaries and facilities are assigned a regulator based on their zip code. Agency boundaries are not defined by zip code resulting in facilities assigned to the incorrect CUPA. Due to this, facilities may go unregulated, the emergency response plans and hazardous materials storage information may not make it to the correct responders, and communities are at risk. The current fix is labor intensive for CUPAs/PAs and if a facility is assigned to the wrong jurisdiction, the correct CUPA/PA may not even know it exists.

CalEPA has received a one-year Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) grant to create geospatial dataset for the CUPA and PA jurisdictional boundaries. The resulting CUPA jurisdictional boundary information will be incorporated into multiple systems including but not limited to CERS and the GIS portal for use by CalEPA Emergency Management Response Committees (ERMaC).

Accurate CUPA assignment information will assist local responders during emergency response, and other state-level decision makers, such as CalOES, who utilize this information when responding to large-scale disasters. The implementation into CERS NextGen will also enhance communication between the CUPA public.

Impacts

CUPAs will be asked to assist in the development of the boundary for their agency and collaborate with their PA.

CERS NextGen will delineate CUPA assignment based on GIS location, not zip code.

What is Next

Project is anticipated to release the RFO in March.

CUPA participation will be needed starting in the summer.

CERS NextGen

Background

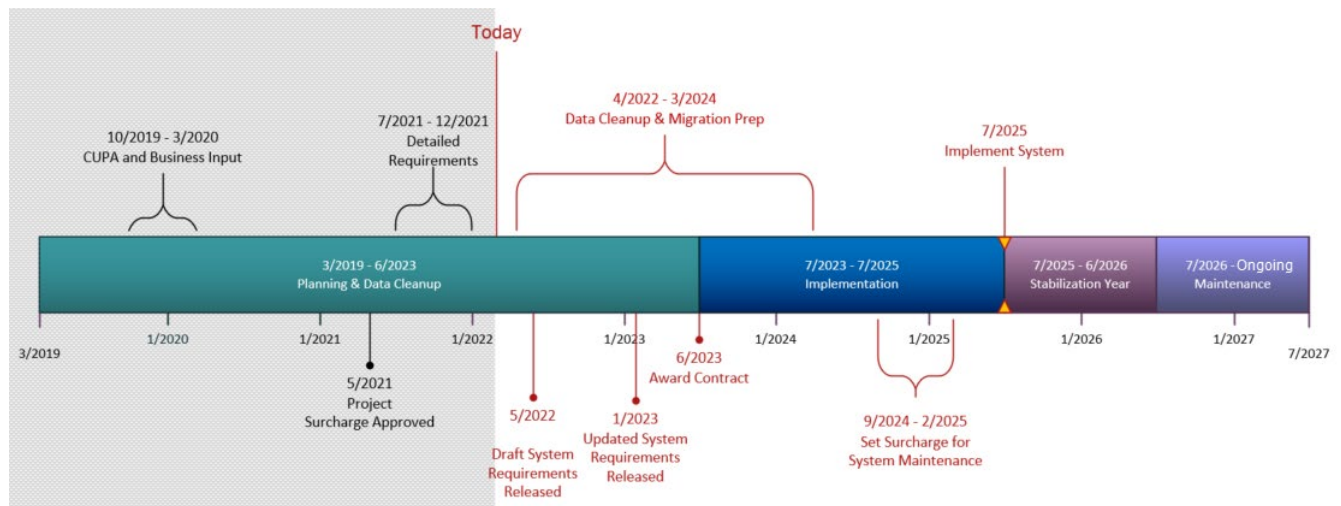
In 2019 CalEPA started the CERS NextGen Project to examine the effectiveness of current business processes, identify issues and pain points, realign processes with business needs, streamline overall functions, and implement requested enhancements. The objectives of CERS NextGen Project include:

- Modernize technology
- Comply with statutory and regulatory requirements
- Resolve identified pain points including Data Quality issues and system/process inefficiencies

- Prioritize and implement defined enhancements requests
- Develop and implement metrics for Key Performance Indicators
- Implement an adaptable solution that can accommodate future business needs and improve the efficiency of business processes
- Align system with business needs and policies

Progress to Date

2019	Defined existing system, issues, and enhancement requests Defined what the next version of CERS should do Defined the CERS NextGen mid-level requirements, completed
2020	Market research, gathered vendor input Pandemic starts affecting resource availability Developed program Key Performance Indicators to be used
2021	Project budget approved by DOF, new fees to fund project Detailed requirements developed Started Advisory Board meetings, working through project issues Data Cleanup and Procurement Support contracts developed



Key Changes

User Interface

- Mobile accessibility
- New required data fields
- Standardized chemical naming
- Validation and verification of information

Communication

- New functionality for CUPAs/PAs to recommend minor changes to submittals
- Facilities will be able to upload RTC documents to CERS
- Enhanced management of notifications for activities

- New status dashboards and report options

Impacts in 2022

Data clean-up contract anticipated to start in Spring.

Data clean-up participation will be needed from both CUPAs and facilities to correct existing issues. This is expected to start in Summer of 2022 and extend into 2023.

What is Next

In March or April, data clean-up efforts are anticipated to be initiated.

Software which interfaces with CERS may require updates due to new capabilities.

Summer 2022 release of system specifications is anticipated. CUPAs/PAs should discuss the new specifications with their current solution vendors to ensure a smooth transition in 2025/26, and report back to CalEPA any major concerns/constraints.

An updated system specification is anticipated to be released in Quarter 1 of 2023. CUPAs/PAs should discuss the updated specifications with their current solution vendors and report back to CalEPA any major concerns/constraints.

The project is expected to complete in 2024 with a transition year to enable local software updates.

State Water Board

Farewell

As most of you know, after managing the Underground Storage Tank Leak Prevention Unit for more than a decade, Laura Fisher has accepted a new position and will continue to honorably serve Californians as the Assistant Director of the Office of Research, Planning and Performance. We can safely say that the waters of the state are substantially better because of her tireless efforts. Laura has been an icon in the underground storage tank universe, and she will be greatly missed.

Underground Storage Tank Leak Prevention Semi-Annual Report

On February 16, 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) provided underground storage tank (UST) stakeholders with the [California Underground Storage Tank Leak Prevention January-June 2021 Semi-Annual Report](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/ust/docs/final_ust_leak_prevention_jan-jun2021.pdf) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/ust/docs/final_ust_leak_prevention_jan-jun2021.pdf).

The report was developed in collaboration between the United States Environmental Protection Agency and State Water Board. CERS and the California GeoTracker databases were used to obtain report information. This report summarizes important information such as CERS implementation status, unauthorized release reporting, and single-walled UST system data. Data is provided at both the Unified Program Agency (UPA) and State-wide levels.

Some noteworthy information includes: there were zero new unauthorized releases discovered during this timeframe; 71 percent of UPAs are approved for paperless reporting; and single-walled UST removal continues to be below the target rate to have all single-walled systems removed by December 31, 2025.

For more information regarding the UST Leak Prevention Semi-Annual Report, contact: Mr. Tom Henderson at (916) 319-9128 or Tom.Henderson@waterboards.ca.gov, or Mr. Austin Lemire-Baeten at (916) 327-5612 or Austin.Lemire-Baeten@waterboards.ca.gov.

In-Station Diagnostics Software Update

On January 21, 2022, State Water Board staff issued a [letter to all UST stakeholders](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ust/docs/2022/2022-01-21-isd-letter.pdf) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ust/docs/2022/2022-01-21-isd-letter.pdf) regarding expired data in Veeder Root's TLS-350s that use In-Station Diagnostics (ISD). The expired data element causes fuel position collection failures that lead to a full system shutdown. A software update is available from Veeder Root to correct this condition.

Any monitoring panel software updates must be installed by a service technician with current training from Veeder Root and certification from the International Code Council. Installing the software update requires a system cold start and therefore certification of the monitoring system before the UST can be made operational. Owners and operators receiving the update must contact their UPA for any required permitting, certifications, and additional directions. Failure to do so may result in enforcement action by the UPA or State Water Board.

For more information regarding the ISD software update, contact: Mr. Tom Henderson at (916) 319-9128 or Tom.Henderson@waterboards.ca.gov, or Mr. Austin Lemire-Baeten at (916) 327-5612 or Austin.Lemire-Baeten@waterboards.ca.gov.

New UST Leak Prevention Staff

The UST Leak Prevention Unit is pleased to announce the hire of an Environmental Scientist, Jenna Hartman. Jenna previously worked as a Scientific Aid for the State Water Board UST Leak Prevention Unit and for Redhorse Corporation as a contractor for the State Water Board, Office of Enforcement, UST Unit. She recently worked as a Registered Environmental Health Specialist for Placer County Environmental Health where she conducted field inspections on hazardous material, hazardous waste, aboveground storage tank, and underground storage tank sites and was a member of the incident response team. Jenna can be reached at Jenna.Hartman@waterboards.ca.gov.

Cal FIRE OSFM

CAL FIRE Director Appointment

On March 3, 2022, the Governor appointed Chief Joseph Tyler as the Director of CAL FIRE. More information may be found on the [Office of the Governor website](https://www.gov.ca.gov/2022/03/03/governor-newsom-announces-appointments-3-3-22/).
(<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2022/03/03/governor-newsom-announces-appointments-3-3-22/>)

References or links to information cited in this newsletter are subject to change. CalEPA is interested in your comments and suggestions regarding the Unified Program monthly newsletter. Please email your comments and suggestions to: cupa@calepa.ca.gov.

[CalEPA Unified Program Home Page](#)