

567—135.17 (455B) Evaluation of ability to pay.

135.17(1) General. The ability to pay guidance procedures referenced in this rule will be used by the department when an owner or operator of an underground storage tank (UST) claims to be financially unable to comply with corrective action requirements under 135.7(455B) to 135.12(455B) or closure investigation requirements under 135.15(455B). If an owner or operator of a regulated UST claims to be financially unable to meet these departmental requirements, that responsible party must provide documentation of the party's finances on forms provided by the department in order for the department to act on the claim of financial inability. The department may request additional financial documentation to verify or supplement reported information.

135.17(2) Individual claims. The financial ability of individual owners and operators of USTs, with or without an active business (including but not limited to sole proprietorships and general partnerships), shall be evaluated using the "Individual Ability to Pay Guidance" document dated June 19, 1992, and generally accepted principles of financial analysis. This guidance is only one tool the department may use in evaluating claims of financial inability.

135.17(3) Corporate claims. The financial ability of corporate owners and operators of USTs shall be evaluated using the June 1992 version of "ABEL" developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and generally accepted principles of financial analysis. This guidance is only one tool the department may use in evaluating claims of financial inability.

135.17(4) Federal LUST Trust Fund. The financial ability of owners and operators of USTs shall be evaluated for the purpose of determining if the department is authorized to use Federal LUST Trust Fund moneys as provided in the current cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VII. A determination of financial inability does not create an entitlement or any expectation interest on behalf of an owner or operator that Federal LUST Trust Fund moneys will be used for corrective action at any individual site.

135.17(5) The evaluation of financial ability will also be used by the department in making other administrative planning decisions including but not limited to decisions as to whether to pursue and when to pursue administrative or judicial enforcement of regulatory and statutory duties and the assessment of penalties. A determination of financial inability does not create an entitlement or expectation interest that enforcement actions will be deferred or suspended. The evaluation of this factor is only one of many affecting the department's fully discretionary decisions regarding enforcement options and program planning.

135.17(6) An evaluation of financial inability as provided in this rule does not relieve any owner or operator of legal liability to comply with department rules or Iowa Code chapter 455B or provide a defense to any legal actions to establish liability or enforce compliance.