

PHOTO: FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN



Construction workers modify fuel tank at Division 11.

## **\$6 Million Project Upgrades Division Fuel Tank Systems**

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(July 23, 2003) MTA is upgrading fuel piping and storage tanks at nine operating divisions in a \$6 million project aimed at improving safety and meeting state environmental guidelines.

Begun in June, the work involves excavating old underground fuel tanks and replacing them with new tanks and piping. Now in progress at Metro Blue Line Division 11 and West Hollywood Division 7, the project also will include divisions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9.

"By upgrading these tanks, we prevent the possibilities of any releases into the ground water or soil," Environmental Specialist Tom Kefalas says.

Each division upgrade will take about a month. Kefalas expects the entire project to be completed by March, 2004.

Although the regulations put in place by the Regional Water Quality Control Board are not yet being enforced, MTA's environmental compliance department is ensuring that the divisions are up to standards.

"The current tanks are serviceable, but if the modifications are not met MTA will end up being fined, so we are being proactive about meeting this guideline," Kefalas says. "The fines could be up to \$10,000 per day until the problem is fixed, but it's at the discretion of the inspector looking at the project."

### **Space could be tight**

While the construction takes place, space at the divisions could be tight due to construction equipment and the placement of soil that has been removed from the ground.

"We will work around the space issue by adjusting to bus schedules during high traffic time and stockpiling soil away from the crowded spaces at the division," Kefalas says. "The bottom line is there will be a

space crunch while the work is being done, but it's just a speed bump that will not effect the performance of the division."

Besides schedule and space concerns, there is the issue of safety. During construction, heavy machinery will be in use and there will be holes in the ground.

"We will be more cautious about being safe," Kefalas says. "It boils down to having good communication with the division manager while we are there."

After the project is completed, the new storage tanks will be monitored 24 hours a day by an electronic leak detection system and will be inspected annually to ensure that tanks are safe and without leaks.

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