

SUPERIOR ACCOMPLISHMENT AWARD

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Staff: Galvin Kauffman
Title: Senior Engineering Geologist
Unit: Enforcement, Underground Storage Tanks (UST)
Office: Rancho Cordova
Sup: Matthew Buffleben, Supervising Water Resource Control Engineer

Over the last two years, Mr. Kauffman has presided over two efforts to improve the organization and record keeping of the UST Program. The first challenge was to remove staff network folders and move important file information from the staff folders to GeoTracker. Historically, Regional Board staff kept case information in their staff folders on the network drives. This created several issues, particularly when cases were reassigned, because the newly assigned staff would not have access to the pervious folders. Additionally, having case information in staff folders made responding to Public Records Act (PRA) requests challenging and time-consuming because staff would have to search their staff folders to respond to the request and if there were responsive documents, ensure that they were made available. Mr. Kauffman was able to create the goals of the project, collaborating with an Office of Chief Council (OCC) attorney, other sections, and units to establish protocols, and then track staff efforts until the project was completed.

The second project that Mr. Kauffman headed was the review of over 200 banker boxes of case files. These boxes potentially contained valuable case information, like groundwater monitoring data. Mr. Kauffman worked with State Board staff to identify pathways to scan valuable information and ensure that information is uploaded into GeoTracker. After securing this resource, Galvin worked with all the staff in the section to provide clear guidance on reviewing the data and GeoTracker, identifying valuable information to be saved, and ensure that the information was delivered to State Board staff for preservation.

Staff are expected to maintain their files and supervisors confirm that staff are meeting this expectation. However, when the supervisor goes beyond the work of their unit, it clearly exceeds the scope of their duties. Mr. Kauffman headed these efforts for two sections (Underground Storage Tanks and Site Cleanup Program). Additionally, he showed excellent leadership and project management skills by engaging staff and management to ensure that the projects would be completed.

For much of the time for the first project, there was no supervisor for the section. So, in addition to his unit duties, Mr. Kauffman collaborated with the other section supervisor to

ensure that cases were being appropriately reviewed and developed. Certainly, these tasks alone would have kept any senior busy, but Mr. Kauffman was able to successfully direct this project too. These personal efforts to ensure his staff co-lead the section, and head these projects are well beyond normal expectations.

These two efforts had opportunities to find creative solutions. In organizing files and reducing duplications, there is always the risk that important information is accidentally disposed of. In developing these projects, Mr. Kauffman reached out and collaborated with other divisions and organizations to develop the ideal solution given the constraints of the project. Finding the path to having important information stored without needlessly wasting staff time took some ingenuity and collaboration with State Board and CalEPA staff. Additionally, the original timeline for reviewing the file boxes was over several months, however, when a new deadline was given due to imminent construction, Mr. Kauffman quickly rallied his staff and was able to enlist additional staff to assist in the project.

There are many tangible benefits to these efforts. Having an office where files are well-maintained and organized greatly increases the efficiency of file reviews and the transfer of cases when staff are reassigned cases. Mr. Kauffman's efforts helped formalize the procedures and trained staff on document management and retention processes.

The benefits extend well beyond the Central Valley Regional Board. The process used can be shared with other Water Board's Offices. The Underground Storage Tanks and Site Cleanup Programs get frequent file review requests because the public has great interest in knowing if their property is contaminated and developers want to know if they can safely construct new developments without additional costs or liabilities. By organizing and ensuring that this information is properly stored and maintained in our public databases, these tasks have been beneficial to the people of California.