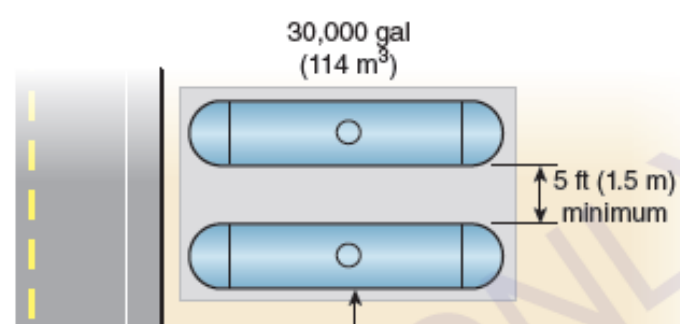


6.4.2.3 No part of an underground or mounded ASME container shall be less than 10 ft (3 m) from a building or line of adjoining property that can be built upon.

Key Issues for Understanding Critical Components of NFPA 58 Separation Distances

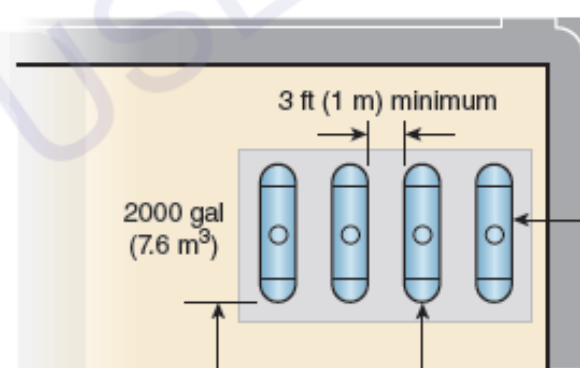
A How Are Separation Distances Determined?

When separation distances are measured between aboveground containers, the measurement is made to the closest surface of the container as illustrated in “A.” Separation distances between underground or mounded containers are made from the container surface per 6.4.2.2. In addition, no part of an underground or mounded container is permitted to be less than 10 ft (3 m) from a building or line of adjoining property that can be built upon per 6.4.2.3 and 6.30.2.3. The reasoning for this is two-fold. First, if an underground container is leaking, gas will migrate some distance through the dirt and if an underground structure (e.g., basement) is placed too close, there is the possibility for gas to accumulate in that structure and become a fire or explosion hazard. Second, the 10 ft separation distance allows for construction, such as laying a foundation, to be conducted on a building with reduced potential of coming into contact with the underground container.



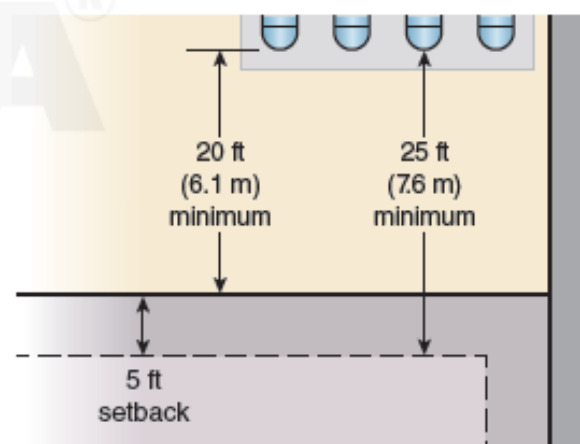
B When Is Aggregate Capacity Used?

“B” illustrates a group of containers that might be commonly encountered in the field. In this scenario, the separation distance would not be determined by the aggregate capacity. The first column in Table 6.4.1.1, “Water Capacity per Container,” means that the aggregate (total) capacity of multiple containers is not used when determining separation distances of containers to an important building, group of buildings, or line of adjoining property that can be built upon. The only time the aggregate capacity is used is when the water capacity of containers of less than 125 gal (0.5 m³) exceeds 500 gal (1.9 m³), as stated in 6.4.3.



C What does “line of adjoining property that can be built upon” mean?

Most interpretations of “line of adjoining property that can be built upon” in 6.4.1.1 are regarding the application of local zoning ordinances. Setbacks are often written into the zoning ordinances to clarify how close a building can be placed in relation to a property line, as shown in “C.” Any discrepancy in the zoning laws should be taken into account by the AHJ when reviewing applications. The intent of the code is to provide separation from buildings, those that are existing or those that could be built in the future, not an imaginary line. Setbacks can be problematic to use when applied to the location of LP-Gas containers. In some jurisdictions, setbacks may not apply to heat pumps, gas packs, air-conditioning units, and other devices that may be sources of ignition.



D What Is an “Important building”?

An *important building* is now defined in 3.3.38 as “a building that is considered not expendable in an exposure fire.” A building can be considered not expendable for a number of reasons, such as high replacement value, human occupancy, or vital importance of contents to a business (e.g., control rooms). Human occupancy may be constant or might only be for brief periods of time; however, human occupancy does not automatically make a building important. A building with characteristics that hinder emergency responders’ access and ability to safely apply water to a tank or act as an impediment to applying water should also be considered an important building. “D” shows a possible example of what might not be considered an “important building” by some AHJs, but may be considered an “important building” by others.

