# How Many Antennas Are Too Many?

John M. Lieb, P.E. Chief Engineer

Tank Industry Consultants 7740 West New York Street Indianapolis, IN 46214 317 / 271-3100 - phone 317 / 271-3300 - FAX Lieb@TankIndustry.com

# Introduction



Multiple provider antenna systems on the same tank is commonplace today

How can a tank owner know before there are too many antennas?

# Keep in Mind:

Most existing water tanks were not designed to support antenna equipment

At some point, too many antennas can overload the tank or make it unsafe

General
Health and Safety
Workmanship

#### General

Assess structural condition

- Distribute loads to prevent structural distress
- Limit application of epoxy & stud welding
- Mount antenna cables properly
- Installation must comply with FAA requirements
- Installation details must prevent corrosion damage

#### Health and Safety

Radio frequency exposure of personnel

- Proper disinfection if entry to tank is required
- Check for hazardous materials in coatings
- Access to antennas must satisfy OSHA regulations
- Antenna equipment must not obstruct ladders, access openings, or vents

#### **General Workmanship**

- Antenna equipment must not obstruct ladders, access openings, or vents
- Holes cut must be properly reinforced
- Multiple penetrations should be done one at a time
- Adequate clearance must be provided for welder access

## Other Antenna Equipment Standards

TIA/EIA-222-G, "Structural Standards for Steel Antenna Towers and Supporting Structures"

- Intended for structures that are dedicated to antenna and communications equipment support
- Uses same or equivalent engineering codes and standards as tank standards (AWWA, API, e.g.) for loads and design methods

### Structural Considerations

- What is the structural condition of the tank and foundation?
- What are the effects of the existing and proposed new antenna equipment loads on the tank and foundation?
- Acceptance criteria for antenna equipment loading should be based on current tank standards.

## Structural Condition of Tank/Foundation



#### Structural Considerations

 Amount of antenna equipment a tank will support is limited by design/construction of tank and foundation.

 Additional antenna equipment may result in localized overstress, distortion, or general instability of the tank – or any combination of these.



# Wind Loads

Multiple Antenna Systems
 Greater increase in loads
 Stress on anchorage system
 Cumulative effect

# Effects on Structural Integrity of Tank







## Effects on Structural Integrity of Tank



#### When Are There Too Many Antennas?

- When structural modifications are necessary to reduce stress to acceptable levels.
- When antenna weight and wind loads cause distortion of tank components.
- When overturning stability exceeds acceptance criteria of current industry standards.

#### When Are There Too Many Antennas?

When cumulative amount of antenna equipment, including cables, prevents:
 Safe access to ladders, access openings, etc.
 Proper maintenance of tank interior and exterior coatings







# Effects on Access for Maintenance



# Effects on Access for Coating





## What Should a Tank Owner Expect?

- A functional, reliable installation that is easy to maintain and does not interfere with the operation or maintenance of components of the tank on which the antenna equipment is mounted
- Proper planning, execution, and verification of the antenna installation is performed

## **Planning**

- Perform structural evaluation to determine the condition of the tank and foundation & assess any deterioration
- Will antenna equipment installation overload the tank or foundation?
- Will antenna equipment installation interfere with operation or maintenance of the tank?
- Structural evaluation & design review should be performed by 3<sup>rd</sup> party professional engineer (P.E.)

## Planning

- Antenna service provider must provide detailed plans & specifications for all proposed new antenna equipment
- All existing antenna equipment must also be considered

## **Detailed Plans & Specifications**



#### Information Required for Analysis

Drawings from Proposed Installer Layout and dimensions Weight of equipment • Site Evaluation Measurements of existing equipment locations Photographs Datasheets of installed equipment

#### Execution

- Antenna equipment installation should not commence until structural, safety, and maintenance issues have been resolved.
- Installation should be performed by qualified contractors.
- Installation should be in strict accordance with final plans and specifications certified by P.E.

#### Verification

Installation work should be verified by 3<sup>rd</sup> party inspection company or P.E. to ensure compliance with final plans & specifications
 Any non-compliance should be corrected to satisfaction of tank owner and 3<sup>rd</sup> party P.E.

## Structural Inspection/Field Verification



#### Summary

Careful planning, execution, and verification of antenna equipment installations will enable the tank owner to maximize the amount of antenna equipment a tank can support without harmful effects on the structural integrity, safety, and maintenance.

# Ouestions or Comments?