



Coffee County Emergency Management Agency
300 Hillsboro Blvd. Box 6
Manchester, TN 37355
(931) 570-2282



To Whom It May Concern,

The Coffee County Emergency Management Agency & Homeland Security was tasked to perform an investigation into the cause of the fuel release that occurred on 10-29-2025 at 2312 at Tullahoma Airport. The release was caused by the sump valve that was on the back of the fuel pump box housing that had been flowing for an unknown amount of time. When CCEMA arrived on scene there was a bucket that was hanging on the valve handle and the valve was approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ the way open with the Jet-A fuel flowing from the pipe that was connected to the sump valve. The valve was shut off, and the bucket was removed from the valve and placed on the ground. The Tullahoma Fire Department along with CCEMA then started the containment process stopping the flow into the storm water system. CCEMA notified the Safety and Codes Director N Kimbro that the incident had occurred and that a Hazardous Material Cleanup Company would be needed due to the unknown amount of fuel and that the fuel made it to the storm water system. CCEMA notified Ozone Environmental Service of the release, and they responded to the scene. The clean up company OES arrived on scene within 30 minutes. CCEMA along with Safety Director Kimbro and OES worked together to find where the storm water discharge was located. OES took over the operation starting the containment and mitigation of the release.

On 11-5-2025 CCEMA Deputy Director Evans along with Safety Director Kimbro met with the Titan fuel representative, Mr. Steve Johnson, to determine standard operating procedure that is followed in other airport and fuel locations. We discussed the locations where the bucket is usually located and the type of valves that is used. The Titan fuel representative stated that the bucket is not stored on the pipe or the valve that they are usually located in a cabinet near the area. He also stated that the ball valve in question is still seen in many airports where older tanks are in use, but they do recommend that they are swapped out to spring loaded ball valves on the sump lines.

On 11-14-2025 CCEMA Deputy Director Evans received the recorded statement from Mr. Sissom, which was the same event that he put in the statement that was taken from him right after the event the only difference was that he said that the bucket that was hanging by the handle on the sump valve was approximately half full of water.

(Hypothesis one) The Airport staff stated that they believed that the wind and rain on the night of the release was the cause of the release. CCEMA and Director Kimbro collected data from two sources, the KTHA weather station and from Kissy Hurley the



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Chief Meteorologist with NWS Nashville for the time frame that the release occurred. The sources all had an average wind speed varied from 6-11mph sustained with gusts up to 20mph. Rainfall total were at .04 inches during the time of the release.

(Hypothesis two) The bucket that is usually hanging behind the valve was hung in the wrong area instead of the handle of the bucket being behind the sump valve it was on the handle of the sump valve. This along with the bucket being half full of water was able to crack open the sump valve or the valve being left crack open with a small amount of fuel being released. The more the bucket filled up the more it would open the valve. The more fuel that was being discharge the more pressure and the more it would open the ball valve.

The Coffee County Emergency Agency & Homeland Security is Classifying this release as **ACCIDENTAL.**

With the contributing factors being

- **Human error by the bucket being hanging on the sump valve line. After the meeting with the Titan Fuel representative, that stated that this is not a recommended practice.**
- **Lack of training Mr. Sissom stated that he has never had any formal training fueling operations**
- **Lack of standard operating procedures (SOP) or standard operating guidelines (SOG)**
- **The sump valve was not spring loaded, or a locking valve and the bucket handle was hung on the piping and not located in a cabinet.**
- **The airport management not requiring proper training for employees that handle the fuel system.**

Coffee County EMA Deputy Director