

GUIDE TO HEATING OIL STORAGE TANKS



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SAFE AND EFFICIENT STORAGE

Having an oil tank on your property puts you in control of your comfort. You pay only for the fuel that's delivered, with no estimates or questions. And you can choose from many oil dealers and delivery options. Plus, have you ever heard of an oil tank leak that caused an explosion?

Types of Tanks

There are two kinds of residential oil storage tanks:

An **aboveground** storage tank may be located outside a house, or it may be in a basement, garage or crawl space.

An **underground** storage tank is buried beneath the ground.

The size of a tank can be determined by checking an oil delivery ticket from the home's heating oil company. Common tank sizes are 275 gallons for an aboveground tank and 550 and 1,000 gallons for an underground tank.



Many home-owners now have aboveground tanks installed inside tank enclosures, such as the one pictured here.

ABOVEGROUND TANK INSPECTION

Use this checklist to visually inspect your aboveground tank to prevent problems.

- ✓ Make sure the fill cap and vent cap are secured, and check that they are not clogged or restricted by ice, snow or insect nests.
- ✓ Look for leakage from tank fittings, valves, filters, piping or the tank gauge; look for weeping (moisture) at the tank seams.
- ✓ Inspect for signs of spills around the tank, fill pipe or vent lines.
- ✓ Make sure the tank is set on concrete, the tank legs are in good condition and the "belly" of the tank is not touching the ground.
- ✓ Look for signs of corrosion. An aboveground tank can be painted to seal over minor corrosion and improve the appearance of the tank. This is especially beneficial in the case of an outdoor tank.
- ✓ If you have questions about your aboveground tank, be sure to contact the experts — your local heating oil dealer.

Today's aboveground tanks are double-walled, providing extra protection.



REPLACEMENT OPTIONS

The chance of a home heating oil tank leaking is extraordinarily low. And the technology used in the manufacture of today's tanks makes it even less likely that your aboveground or underground tank will leak.

The life expectancy of underground tanks varies, depending on the materials used in a tank's manufacture, how it was installed and the composition of the surrounding soil. Most tanks last for several decades without a problem. But like your home's roof, an underground tank will eventually need to be replaced.

If you think your tank is old and in need of replacement, you have two good options.

 Replace an underground tank with a new **fiberglass tank** or a **corrosion-resistant, cathodically protected underground tank**. With today's technology, a new tank can be separated from the soil, making it worry-free.

 Replace an underground tank with an **aboveground tank**, which is normally smaller (275 gallons) and can be **customized for hard-to-fit places**. Aboveground tanks can be installed in your basement or outside the home and hidden in a tank enclosure.

Both of these options enable you to continue enjoying the savings, safety and service advantages of oilheat.



Heating oil is nontoxic and biodegradable.

There are no federal or Pennsylvania laws that require the removal of a properly functioning, active residential heating oil tank.



OILHEAT DEALERS CAN HELP

Many oil dealers are qualified to inspect and replace underground and aboveground tanks. They can also refer you to an independent contractor certified to do this type of work. Be sure to contact your local oilheat dealer for more information.

GUIDELINES FOR REPLACEMENT

Homeowners considering upgrading their oil tank are in good company today. Many are replacing an underground tank with a new modern underground or aboveground tank for a number of reasons, including these:

- The tank is several decades old and is nearing the end of its life span.
- Today's tanks are smaller and more attractive.
- A new tank will increase the value of the home and be more appealing to potential home buyers.

If you decide to replace an underground tank with an aboveground tank, it's important to remember the following:

- The buried tank must be either removed or properly abandoned. If the tank is abandoned, it should be emptied, cleaned and then filled with an inert material such as sand.
- You should make sure to work with a reputable company certified to remove or abandon underground tanks.
- Before proceeding, contact your local oilheat company to ask about any municipal codes that may affect the abandonment or removal of an underground tank.

UNDERGROUND TANK TESTING

In some cases, a homeowner who is buying or selling a home is faced with a requirement from a lender or an insurance company to have an underground oil tank tested. If this happens to you, here are three things to keep in mind when considering your options.

1. There are **several tests** that can be conducted and the need for each varies. Often, a combination of tests is appropriate. To avoid confusion and to get information on the most accurate test for you, consult with a local oilheat dealer, who can best assess your situation.
2. Any work should be conducted by **a company that is certified** to do tank testing.
3. Seek out advice from your local **oilheat dealer**, who can be an important source for up-to-date information on tank issues.

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