

Why should I care about the shape of my oil tank?

Fuel oil is a safe and reliable source of heat for New Hampshire residents. However, age, exposure to weather, corrosion, or poor installation or maintenance can adversely affect a heating oil supply tank and piping. The result can lead to spills that can cause groundwater, surface water and soil contamination, degradation of indoor air quality, personal property damage, and lower property values.

There are more than 250,000 oil heat customers in New Hampshire, the majority of which are residential.

Residential and small business owners predominantly store their heating oil in small (275-gallon) above-ground tanks.

The number of reported leaks and spills occurring every year from these tanks is a very small percentage of the existing total. However, as the existing tank population ages, more releases are being reported. In addition, many existing tanks do not meet today's standards.



What's my financial risk?

The average cost to clean up a residential oil release is in excess of \$15,000. The cost of several releases over the years, however, has exceeded \$100,000 to complete the cleanup. Typical homeowner's insurance policies often do not provide coverage for oil releases.

The state of New Hampshire provides cleanup cost funding for on-premise-use heating oil tank owners that do not have private insurance coverage. However,



to be eligible for the state funds, a tank owner has a degree of responsibility. Owners must achieve compliance with heating oil tank installation requirements found in state statute and the state Fire Code. In addition, compliance with Department of Environmental Services' "Best Management Practices For the Installation and Upgrading of On-Premise-Use Heating Oil Tanks" (also called BMPs) will be a future condition of fund eligibility.

Please note: Those tank owners who fail to achieve compliance with the statute, fire code and BMPs by July 1, 2014, may see a reduction in state funding with resulting higher out-of-pocket cleanup costs.

What should I look for in my existing tank?

- Are the tank and all portions of the system free from any leaks? Yes No
- Does the tank meet either Underwriters Laboratory 80 or 142 standards? (Typically indicated by a sticker or stamped label.) Yes No
- Are the tank and all supports free from significant rust and corrosion? Yes No

- Is the tank completely above the ground and at least 4 inches from any surface on all sides? Yes No
- Is the tank set on a one-piece concrete pad or concrete floor? Yes No
- Are the tank legs installed with floor flanges or another type of "feet"? Yes No
- If outdoors, is the tank on the gable end of the building or otherwise protected from roof ice & snow damage? Yes No
- If outdoors, is the filter covered or otherwise adequately protected? Yes No
- Is the supply line continuously plastic-coated copper from the tank to the furnace with no unions or splices? Yes No
- Is the inside diameter of the vent pipe at least 1.25 inches and equal to or larger than the fill pipe? Yes No
- Does the tank have a working sight gauge and vent whistle? (An audible device to warn the oil delivery person that the tank is full.) Yes No
- Are both the fill and vent lines fitted with proper caps? Yes No

Now what do I do?

If you've answered "No" to any of these questions, your tank system may be at risk. You should contact your oil company or a reputable plumbing and heating contractor for further evaluation.

