

# Your guide to Residential Heating Oil Tanks Provided by:



## Decommissioning an Underground Oil Tank

A tank decommissioning is a voluntary process in which an abandoned oil tank is properly taken out of service to protect the environment and human health and safety. We perform Decommissions that meet DEQ qualifications for certifying. This work includes soil sampling, pumping & cleaning of the tanks and back-filling of the tank with an inert material. Decommissionings can be in the form of a tank removal. They are often done as part of a cleanup.

### Do I have an oil tank on my property?

Even if you are not currently using oil heat, you may have an oil tank on your property from oil heat being used in the past.

#### Visual Clues:

1.) **Look for a vent pipe.** It is normally (not always) attached to the side of the house. It is typically 1.25 inches in diameter with a cap attached to the top.

2.) **Look for a fill pipe.** It is usually (not always) located in the ground, near the house. It is typically 2 inches in diameter. Ideally it is covered by a metal plate labeled "Oil".

3.) **Look for signs of oil lines.** Look on the basement floor for concrete patches leading from the wall to a furnace. Sometimes you will see cut lines sticking out of the floor or wall or patches where lines once were.

#### No visual clues?

1.) Check [www.portlandmaps.com](http://www.portlandmaps.com). Enter the property address. When it appears, click the "storage tank" button. If a permit was pulled, a copy will appear.

2.) Check DEQ's web-site for reported releases.

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/tank/ust-lust.htm>

3.) For a Tank Locate, call us at: 503.236.6359.



### Visual Signs of a tank



Fill Pipe

### If a tank is discovered-Soil Sampling is the next step

#### Soil Sampling-why & how?

To check a tank for leaks: 2 samples are taken from below the bottom of a tank on opposite ends of the tank using a hand auger or "Geo Probe". Samples are tested for Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH). Results can usually be obtained within 48 hours.

#### Sample Results:

**50 ppm or greater of TPH**-must be reported to DEQ within 72 hours of detection. The cleanup company is required by law to report the leak. Readings of **500 ppm** or higher will require a cleanup action. (see "Cleanup Options").

### Leaking oil tank?

#### **DON'T PANIC!**

Contact your oil company and cancel scheduled fill ups. Contact a licensed service provider, such as "Universal Applicators", to have the remaining oil pumped out as soon as possible to prevent further leakage. A list of Licensed Service Providers is available at the DEQ. Contact your home-owner's insurance to check on available coverage.

### We Install new Tanks



Oil is an excellent heating source. **Many of our customers** remain on Oil Heat after a cleanup is completed. We offer 3 types of replacement tanks. 275 gallon above ground tank, cathodically protected underground tanks, and underground fiberglass tanks. (shown above).

**Real Estate transactions are the number one reason why Soil Samples & Tank Decommissionings are requested.**

Call us at: **503-236-6359**

## Cleanup Options

The DEQ permits 3 cleanup options for heating oil tanks.

**Soil Matrix Cleanup** is the only method that includes excavation and removal of contaminated soil from the property. Final sampling is performed to prove the site is clean. If a house presence restricts the excavation, other cleanup methods can be employed to complete the job.

**Generic Remedy** method leaves the contaminated soil in place. It is restricted to sights where the "hottest" sample is no greater than 10,000 ppm of TPH and the remaining volume of contaminated soil is 65 cubic yards or less. A series of samples are taken to determine the remaining volume. The "hottest" sample over 2500 ppm requires testing for "BTEX", and must be below 0.1 ppm.

**Risk Based Corrective Action (RBCA)** RBCA is used when the site cannot be cleaned up using the Generic Remedy. The contaminated soil is left in place, but additional sampling and Health Risk calculations are performed.

### Which cleanup is best for you?

All cleanups include a tank decommissioning and a DEQ report with a certification, but the Soil Matrix is the only method that removes the contaminated soil. Generic Remedy is inexpensive, but the site must qualify. Leaving in place is less disruptive to the property, but a RBCA, with increasing DEQ regulations, can require costly analysis to justify leaving contamination in place. A combination of the 3 cleanups is can be used if the site dictates. The method used could be altered if ground water is encountered.

**FACT:** A new tank without cathodic protection, buried next to an old tank, will rust rapidly-due to electrolysis.

## More about Decommissionings

**Buyer Beware!** Not all Tank Decommissionings are the same.



When a tank is pumped out, some oil and most of the sludge is left behind to prevent pumps from being clogged. The remaining sludge must be cleaned to ensure that the decommissioned tank is truly no longer an environmental hazard.



**Results of a short cut!**

Rather than remove the sludge, the contractor simply rinsed absorbent into the tank, then introduced a cement slurry claiming that the mixture would encapsulate the remaining contents in the tank. The picture shows that the oil floated on top of a slurry fill.

Decommissioning purposely accelerates the rate a tank rusts away and deteriorates. **As decommissioned tanks rust away, they leave in the ground what was left inside the tank.** In the above case, our company was hired to "fix" the problem the previous contractor left behind.

**When you are quoted a price for a decommissioning, know what you are paying**



When we decommission a tank, we clean the interior of the tank and properly dispose of the oil & sludge with a DEQ approved environmental recycler. As the tank continues to rust, you do not have an environmental cleanup later. **Our decommissionings are certified with the DEQ.**



**50 year old rusted heating oil tank**

**Contact us:**  
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