

Home Heating Oil Tanks



www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/elg/environment/content/land_waste/content/reference_manual/home_heating_oiltanks.html

Background

Nearly 40 percent of all oil spills reported to the Department of Environment annually are from domestic oil tanks at private homes.

A leaking oil tank can become a serious fire and environmental hazard. Whether the tank is located inside or outside the home, a spill can contaminate groundwater affecting a private well or other nearby drinking water supplies.

The removal of oil from a basement, or the cleanup of contaminated soil and water can be difficult and very costly.

Requirements

A fuel oil leak is considered a release of contaminant under the "*Clean Environment Act*";. All spills should be reported to 1-800-565-1633, a 24 hour emergency service.

As a tank owner, the homeowner is responsible to protect their property and the environment by having a properly installed and well maintained home heating oil tank.

Home heating oil tanks are not governed by the "Petroleum Product and Handling Regulation", unless the volume of the tanks on site total 2000 litres or greater. An example of a case such as this, would be a large home or apartment building having two - 250 gallon home heating fuel tanks located on one property.

Recommendations for Installation

When purchasing an oil tank it is important to ensure that the tank has not been previously used. A good indication of tank reliability is the presence of a label that indicates the date the tank was manufactured and that it meets standards such as the National Standard of Canada.

The following points should be considered for tank installation;

1. Prepare a non-flammable base constructed of concrete block, poured concrete or patio blocks, for the tank to sit on.
2. Ensure that the fill, vent and supply piping is made of metal, and do not reuse old copper supply and return lines.
3. Wrap a metal strap around the midpoint of the tank and attach it to a solid structure such as wall studs.

4. Place a rubber gasket between the strap and the tank to prevent corrosion.
5. Use flexible piping to encase the burner supply line. This will act as a temporary containment sleeve in the event the copper line develops a leak.
6. Loop the burner supply line horizontally between the filter and the building to allow for frost heaving.
7. A sturdy cover should be placed over the supply line and filter to prevent damage from falling snow, ice and vandalism.
8. Protect the tank from the weather with a roof like structure.

A small leak can often go undetected allowing oil to penetrate the ground surface under the tank contaminating the soil and groundwater. The positioning of a containment tray or dyke under and around the tank can help to collect the leaking product, and may prevent the discharge of the product to the environment. However, if the dyke or tray is not kept free of rain, snow or other obstructions it will not have the capacity to contain the oil product when the leak occurs.

Whether the tank is located inside or outside the home it should be supported to prevent it from shifting, settling or falling over. A spill containment dyke is recommended for indoor tanks to help prevent the oil from spreading throughout the basement and damaging the home or escaping through a floor drain.