



# Heating Oil Tanks 101

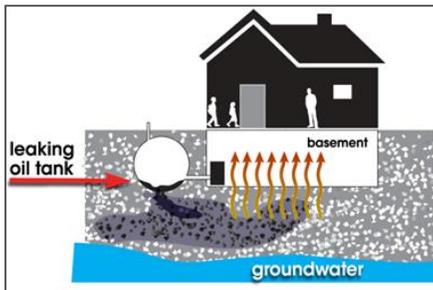
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Made of steel, every tank *will* leak – it’s just a matter of time. According to the DEQ, the life expectancy of an underground heating oil tank is 15 – 20 years. Most tanks were installed just after WWII.

## Heating Oil Contamination Risks

Heating oil (diesel fuel) contains many chemicals, including benzene, naphthalene and ethyl benzene. These three carcinogenic chemicals can evaporate from contaminated soil and get drawn into buildings, putting people at risk for cancer.



Risks of leaking oil tanks

## Cleanups

Leaking tank cleanups can range from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars. Occasionally, the cleanup costs for a severely contaminated property can exceed \$10,000 or more.

## Finding A Tank

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) recommends checking your property for a tank prior to listing. If the home you’re selling or interested in buying was built

before the 1970s or at one time had an oil fired heat source, it’s wise to check for an underground tank. Hire a professional to conduct an underground oil tank search.

## Seller Legal Responsibilities

If there is a heating oil tank on your property you’re required by law to disclose this information to prospective buyers.

If your property has an abandoned tank onsite, you’re legally required to have any remaining oil removed, disposed of in accordance to the current regulations and properly documented.

The current property owner is responsible for any necessary cleanup. If it’s determined the leak happened before they bought the property, the current owner is *still* responsible for cleanup costs.

## Buyer Beware!

It’s essential that you as the prospective buyer understand if you buy property knowing a tank is present and no work has been performed to detect if the tank has leaked, you also become responsible for any leaks discovered in the future. It’s wise to protect yourself by ensuring that any tanks are discovered prior to purchase and that the tank has not leaked.

## Soil Sampling

Per Oregon DEQ, the best way to determine if a heating oil

tank has leaked is to have soil samples collected from under each end of the tank and to have the samples analyzed for diesel and heavy oil.

## Tank Decommissioning

Tank decommissioning involves cleaning the tank out and removing it from the ground or,



*Removal of an underground tank* more commonly, completely filling the clean tank with a DEQ-approved material, such as sand or concrete slurry. Voluntary decommissioning certification, per Oregon DEQ, requires soil samples with acceptable concentrations of petroleum.

## Key Take-Aways

- 1) **Schedule a tank search to minimize your risk**
- 2) **If a tank is found, schedule soil samples**
- 3) **Don’t wait until the last minute!**

EcoTech is a licensed with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) as a third party provider for heating oil tank services. We’re experienced and knowledgeable about regulatory requirements and insurance trends, ensuring the best protection and service available. We assess properties, conduct soil sampling, decommission oil tanks and complete related cleanup services.