



City of Seattle

Decommissioning Residential Heating Oil Tanks

Heating oil is the most expensive and most polluting form of home heat. Seattle homes with oil heat likely have an underground oil tank that is well beyond its useful life. Heating oil can leak from old tanks and pollute your yard, neighbor's yard, shared waterways. Leaking oil can also lead to toxic fumes around the house which may be harmful to your health. . Learn more about the best way to reduce these risks by decommissioning your oil tank.



What is decommissioning?

Decommissioning your oil tank safely takes it out of service by either removing the tank or filling it in place, per Seattle Fire code.

Why decommission?



Avoid Leaks: Heating oil can leak out of its tank and into your yard, neighbors yard, and into our shared waterways. Oil leaks can be expensive to clean up depending on how large they are.



Retire Old Equipment: Most heating oil tanks are past their useful life. Old tanks that have not been decommissioned can leak, cause soil instability, and safety hazards.



Plan For Costs: By proactively decommissioning, you can create a plan for the costs and better access resources to make it more affordable.

**For these reasons and more,
don't wait to decommission your tank!**



Old tanks can develop holes like this which leak oil.
Photo credit Filco.

Consider a new, clean heat source!

The Seattle Clean Heat Program can help you save thousands of dollars on the switch to a heat pump!

Heat pumps can provide heating and cooling in one system, making them great for year-round home comfort. They also lower your heating bill by about 50% and run on clean electricity, making them more affordable than expensive and polluting oil. Visit www.seattle.gov/environment/cleanheat to learn more!



Know the key resources:

Step 1

- If you discover or suspect a leak, report it within 24 hours to 1-800-OILS-911 and stop all automatic heating oil deliveries.
- Per Seattle Fire code, you must decommission oil tanks that have been out of service for a year or more. Refer to the Seattle Fire Department below for a full list of decommissioning requirements.
- Visit the State's Pollution Liability Insurance Agency fact sheet to learn about grants and loans that can help you cleanup a leak. See link at bottom of page.

Consider the options:

Step 2

Seattle Fire Code allows two ways to decommission an oil tank. The list below describes each, but property owners should consider their unique circumstances before choosing an option.

Abandon In Place: Oil is removed, tank is triple washed, tank is filled with inert material (sand, foam, etc.), fill pipe is cut and capped

Removal: Tank is fully removed from the ground and area is filled in

Choose a provider:

Step 3

Decommissioning must be performed or supervised by someone certified as an underground storage tank (UST) decommissioner by the International Code Council (ICC). Certified providers can help talk through the decommissioning options in your situation.

Visit the WA Department of Ecology website for a list of registered tank service providers.



Oil tank being removed from the ground.
Photo credit Filco

Keep records:

Step 4

Keep all records, including permit numbers, receipts, photos, and decommissioning certificate issued by Seattle Fire Department for future reference. For example, home sale documents require disclosure of an oil tank, and prospective buyers may request further documentation.

For more information:

Pollution Liability Insurance Agency:

Learn more about Heating Oil Loan and Grants (HOLG) that can help you decommission.
www.plia.wa.gov/heating-oil-loan-and-grant-program

Seattle Fire Department:

Get more details on tank decommissioning requirements in Seattle.
https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Fire/Business/CAM5962_DecommissionOilTanks.pdf

Clean Heat:

Learn about rebates on the switch to a heat pump!
www.seattle.gov/environment/cleanheat