

Town of Salisbury – Office of the Fire Marshal

FACT SHEET – RESIDENTIAL UNDERGROUND OIL TANKS

This information is presented by the Salisbury Fire Marshal's Office to inform the residential property owner of those laws and regulations affecting the use, installation and removal of underground fuel oil tanks (less than 2,100 gallon capacity). Please do not hesitate to call us (860.671.0277) with any questions.

- An underground residential fuel oil tank, of less than 2,100 gal capacity, may continue to be used as long as it is not leaking AND it is still supplying residential heating equipment.

Note: The DEP estimates that 25% of underground storage tanks are leaking and that the average life span of a plain steel tank underground is 10 to 15 years.

- An underground fuel oil tank no longer in use must be removed or properly abandoned in place. (Complete removal is always preferred unless physical conditions make abandonment in place necessary)
- An underground fuel oil tank that is leaking is an environmental issue covered under Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection regulations. DEP notification of a leaking tank is required (860-424-3338).
- The removal or abandonment of any underground fuel oil tank requires a permit from the Fire Marshal; there is no fee for the permit and an application form is a part of this package.
- Residential tank removal contractors must have a Connecticut HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTOR'S REGISTRATION. [Exception: If the contractor has a valid Connecticut Plumbing and Heating License OR is listed with the Conn. D.E.P. as a Hazardous Waste Contractor] The requirements of the Connecticut Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code must be adhered to.
- Remediation contractors (those who actually remove and dispose of liquid waste and contaminated soil) must be listed as HAZARDOUS WASTE CONTRACTORS with the DEP. Some contractors only do removals; some do both removal and remediation.
- Installation of a new fuel oil tank (whether above ground or in ground) requires a permit from the Town Building Department.
- It is highly recommended that soil sampling be done with any removal or abandonment.

UST REMOVAL BEST PRACTICE

Create a safe workplace by taking safety precautions.

- (1) No smoking in the area.
- (2) Shut down all open flame and spark-producing equipment not necessary for the removal of the underground tank.
- (3) Using only non sparking hand tools to expose tank fittings and preparing for the vapor removal procedures.
- (4) Control static electricity by bonding and grounding equipment and vehicles.
- (5) Secure tank area from pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- (6) Locate and mark all utility lines around tank location.
- (7) Consider weather conditions. Vapor can accumulate on still and high-humidity days. Excavated soil should be tested for vapor release.
- (8) Make sure proper PPE and a combustible gas indicator are available.
- (9) Remove all flammable or combustible liquid and residue from the tank and from all lines.
 1. Residual product and solids shall be disposed of properly.

Purge the tank of flammable vapors or inert the potentially explosive atmosphere in the tank. The tank should be tested to determine if it is safe by one of the following procedures: (1) When purging, a combustible gas indicator is used to measure the reduction in the concentration of flammable vapors. The meter reads from 0 to 100 percent of the LFL. The goal is to achieve a reading of 10 to 20 percent LFL for petroleum tanks. (2) When inerting, an oxygen meter is used to determine when a tank has been successfully inerted. The meter reads from 0 to 100 percent oxygen content. The goal is to achieve a reading of 1 to 10 percent, which is safe for most petroleum products.

2. If abandoning in place, fill the tank completely with an inert solid material. Holes can be cut in the tank top for the introduction of the inert material. Cap or remove remaining underground piping. Back-fill as needed.

3. If removing, observe all procedures listed above except for filling the tank with an inert material. After the tank has been made safe by following purging or inerting procedures, excavate around the tank to uncover it for removal. Remove the tank from the excavation and check it for holes and corrosion. Tanks should be labeled with the contents, vapor state, vapor-freeing treatment method, and a warning against reuse. Tanks should be removed from the site the same day as taken from the ground as vapor can continue to be released from tank wall corrosion or residues. However, before removal, the tank atmosphere must be checked to ensure the flammable vapor concentration does not exceed safe levels. Steel tanks are to be released to a scrap metal dealer after sufficient number of holes or openings are made in the tank to render it unfit for further use.