

## Aboveground Tank Inspection

Use this checklist to visually inspect your aboveground tank to prevent problems.

- ✓ *Make sure the fill cap and vent cap are secured, and check that they are not clogged or restricted by ice, snow or insect nests.*
- ✓ *Look for leakage from tank fittings, valves, filters, piping or the tank gauge; look for weeping (moisture) at the tank seams.*
- ✓ *Inspect for signs of spills around the tank, fill pipe or vent lines.*
- ✓ *Check the condition of tank legs; they should not be sunk into the ground. Also, the tank belly should not be touching the ground.*
- ✓ *Look for signs of corrosion. An aboveground tank can be painted to seal over minor corrosion and improve the appearance of the tank. This is especially beneficial in the case of an outdoor tank.*



Your oil company can do this inspection for you during your annual service checkup.

## Underground Tank Testing

Frequently, a home buyer or seller is faced with a requirement from a lender or insurance company to have an underground oil tank tested. While tank testing cannot determine the life expectancy of the tank, it can provide excellent information about the integrity of the tank. If this happens to you, here are two things to keep in mind when considering your options.

**1** There are several tests that can be conducted on an underground tank, and the need for one test or another can vary. Often, a combination of tests is appropriate. To avoid confusion and to get a reliable assessment of which test, or tests, is best for your situation, consult with a local oilheat dealer.

**2** Any testing work on an underground tank should be conducted by a company that is certified to do tank testing.

### Looking for more information about oilheat?

Visit [OilheatAmerica.com](http://OilheatAmerica.com).

Another important source for up-to-date information is your local oilheat provider.



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# Guide to Heating Oil Storage Tanks



**Massachusetts Energy Marketers Association**

[MassEnergyMarketers.org](http://MassEnergyMarketers.org)

## Safe and Efficient Storage

Having an oil tank on your property puts you in control of your comfort. You pay only for the fuel that's delivered, with no estimates or questions. And you can choose from many oil dealers and delivery options. Plus, have you ever heard of an oil tank leak that caused an explosion?

## Types of Tanks

There are two kinds of residential oil storage tanks:

- *An aboveground storage tank may be located outside a house, or it may be in a basement, garage or crawl space.*
- *An underground storage tank is buried beneath the ground.*

The size of a tank can be determined by checking an oil delivery ticket from the home's heating oil company. Common tank sizes are 275 and 330 gallons for basement or aboveground tanks.

Many homeowners now have aboveground tanks installed inside tank enclosures, such as the one pictured here.





## Oil Storage Tanks Rarely Leak

The risk of a residential heating oil tank leaking is extraordinarily low. According to a major national study,\* historically only six-tenths of 1% of insured tanks have leaked.

What's more, the average insurance claim for a tank leak is \$6,100 — much lower than the alarming big-dollar figures that are sometimes reported. And to put the \$6,100 figure in perspective, consider that the average cost of replacing a home's roof is \$7,000 or more.

\*conducted by the Powderhorn Agency

## No Environmental Laws

Because heating oil tanks are not considered a threat to the environment, there are no federal or Massachusetts laws that require removal of a properly functioning, active, residential heating oil tank.

## Replacement Options

The life expectancies of underground oil tanks vary, depending on the materials used in their manufacture, how the tanks were installed and the composition of the surrounding soil. Most tanks last for many decades without problems. Proper installation and maintenance can increase a tank's life span.



If your current tank needs to be replaced, you have two good options.

**1** Replace an underground tank with an aboveground tank. Aboveground tanks are normally smaller (275 gallons) and they can be customized for hard-to-fit places indoors. They can also be installed outside the home and hidden in a tank enclosure.

**2** Replace an old underground tank with a modern, corrosion-resistant underground tank. With today's technology, a new tank can be isolated from the ground, which will extend the life of the

tank and significantly reduce the likelihood of any future concerns.

Both of these options enable you to continue enjoying the low cost, safety and service advantages of oilheat.

## Guidelines for Replacement

If a homeowner decides to replace an underground tank with an aboveground tank, the buried tank must either be removed or properly closed and abandoned. To close the tank, it needs to be emptied, cleaned and then filled with an inert material such as sand or foam.

**Important:** Work with an experienced professional when closing and abandoning an underground tank.

Before proceeding with a tank abandonment, homeowners should contact their municipal government or local oil company to find out about any codes or regulations that may affect the removal or abandonment of an underground tank.

## How to Tell if an Oil Tank Has Been Closed Properly

The best resource is your town building inspector's office. They will have a record of the tank abandonment on file. Additionally, if a tank has been legally and properly abandoned, there will be no vent or fill pipe.

*For more information about oil tank options, call your local oilheat dealer.*

