



**Township of Lower Makefield**  
**OFFICE OF THE FIRE SERVICE DIRECTOR**  
1100 Edgewood Road Yardley, PA 19067  
(267) 274-1127 firesafety@lmt.org



## **Common Questions about Residential Oil Tanks**

### **Do I need a permit to remove or replace my residential oil tank?**

Yes, whether you are removing/replacing, removing permanently, or abandoning in place you must obtain a permit from the Township and an inspection of the completed work must be done by the Office of the Fire Service Director.



### **If I decide to move my oil tank to the inside, where can I place it?**

Tank must be on a level foundation and if residence is in a flood zone, tank must be secured to prevent from uplifting and moving. Tank cannot be greater than 660 gallons and must be located 5ft. away from any fuel-burning appliances. If tank will be in a garage, proper barriers must be installed to prevent vehicles from encountering it. Ensure fill and vent lines can be accessed outside and are located 2 ft. away from any building opening.

### **If I decide to move my oil tank to the outside, where can I place it?**

Tank must be on a level foundation and if residence is in a flood zone, tank must be secured to prevent from uplifting and moving. Tank cannot be greater than 660 gallons and is located 2 ft. away from any building opening. If tank will be located where vehicle traffic occurs barriers must be installed for protection.





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**If I convert to another fuel source (Gas, Propane, etc.) do I have to remove my outside underground oil tank or can I abandon it?**

Homeowners do have the option to abandon the tank. However, be aware that abandoning a tank does not mean simply converting to another fuel source and leaving a tank filled with oil in the ground or the basement. There is a process that must be undertaken to decommission any abandoned oil tank, and if not done properly, not only could there be natural consequences to the property, but there could also be financial ramifications down the road when attempting to sell your home.

If you've determined to decommission your tank, you have a few different options for decommissioning the tank. This is when the tank is "permanently closed" with one of the following methods:

- Capping the tank
- Filling the tank with an inert solid material like foam, sand or slurry
- Removing the tank from the ground completely

Filling the tank with a substance like polyurethane foam is a popular option since it's lightweight, eliminates health hazards, and strong enough to keep the tank's structural integrity intact. Without foam (or a similar filling), a corroded tank could eventually collapse and leave a sinkhole in your yard.



It's important to choose a reputable oil tank removal professional to decommission your tank. A poor decommissioning job could put you at risk for costly, harmful leaks in the future.

Abandoned tanks, even those that have been decommissioned (emptied and filled properly), can seriously affect home and property values. Many realtors advise their clients to either not consider purchasing a home with an abandoned tank, or to ask for money back in order to remedy the situation themselves, should they decide to pursue the home. Often, they will also make the contract for the sale contingent on having the tank decommissioned and removed prior to closing. While it is not required, by law, to remove an empty and filled tank, if possible, it is in the best interests of a homeowner to have a tank removed.



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**I had my underground old tank removed and there was contamination discovered, what do I need to do next?**

When an underground oil tank is removed the company must test the soil for contamination. One of the first signs that contamination occurred is looking at the oil tank and checking for any holes. The other way is by taking a soil sample from 2 ft. below where tank was located and another soil sample from stockpile of soil removed from around the tank. Most removal companies have equipment on site that can give a reading of the Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH) levels in the soil. If it is determined that the soil is over the acceptable levels than remediation is needed. The company will fill the hole with the soil that was brought and provide a quote to have the contaminated soil remediated.

Heating oil releases must be cleaned up to state environmental cleanup standards. The cleanup standards for soil, groundwater and surface water are found in the Land Recycling Regulations (25 PA Code Chapter 250, Administration of Land Recycling Program). If the cleanup meets these standards and the tank owner completes the administrative and reporting requirements of the Land Recycling Program, DEP will grant a release of liability for the cleanup. A release of liability ensures that DEP will not compel the owner to perform additional environmental cleanup and can be extremely useful if the property may be offered for sale in the future. It will demonstrate to prospective buyers and lenders that the heating oil release has been cleaned up to state standards and that no additional environmental cleanup is required. Information on cleanup requirements and the Land Recycling Program is available from the local DEP regional office and on the DEP website at [www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov) , search term: Land Recycling.

DEP will not grant a release of liability if environmental contamination is not cleaned up or if the cleanup does not meet all the requirements of the Land Recycling Program. The owner will be required to disclose any contamination remaining on the property to prospective buyers when the property is offered for sale, and DEP may take enforcement action to compel a cleanup and/or to ensure that the cleanup standards are met.

The local DEP regional office is available to answer any questions or concerns regarding environmental cleanup. A program is also available to assist owners of leaking underground heating oil tanks with the cost of environmental cleanup. Information on this program may be found at [www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov) , search term: Heating Oil Cleanup Reimbursement, or by contacting the DEP Site Remediation Division at 717-787-0886, email [tankcleanup@pa.gov](mailto:tankcleanup@pa.gov)



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The Underground Heating Oil Tank Cleanup Reimbursement Program provides funds to assist tank owners with eligible environmental cleanup costs resulting from releases of heating oil from underground tanks.

Reimbursements are subject to a \$1,000 deductible, which is satisfied by the first \$1,000 of eligible costs paid by the tank owner. Remaining eligible costs paid by the tank owner may be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$4,000. For owners of multiple tanks, the deductible and reimbursement limit apply on a per tank basis. All reimbursements are funded through the Underground Storage Tank Indemnification Fund, and up to \$750,000 per year is available for this program through December 31, 2027. Go to <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Storage-Tank-Cleanup-Program> for more information.