



## Bulletin: RESIDENTIAL HEATING OIL STORAGE TANKS

### Purpose

To make building contractors and the public aware of the regulations and responsibilities for underground and aboveground oil storage tanks.

### Background

Residential underground and aboveground storage tanks have been installed and used in Canada for over 60 years. They can typically be found in homes built before 1970. Many of these storage tanks are now abandoned or unused, as alternative heating sources – such as natural gas, propane, and electricity have become available.

### How do I know if I have an underground storage tank?

**Signs that you may still have an underground storage tank on your property include** a filler cap in the yard, a vent pipe up the side of the house, or possibly copper feed lines coming through by a furnace.

Property owners may wish to have their property inspected, to identify any heating oil tanks and to minimize the risk of leaks or spills.

### Reasons a property owner may remove their residential heating oil storage tank

- due diligence
- improve the environmental conditions of their property
- remove high risk conditions
- avoid a negative impact to property value
- satisfy a lender, prospective purchaser, or insurance agent



Storage tanks are a potential source of contamination of soil and groundwater. Up to 25% of tanks that get removed have oil seepage issues. They also pose a fire and explosion hazard under certain conditions.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Who is responsible for the regulations surrounding removal of residential storage tanks?

All underground storage tanks regardless of capacity, and any aboveground storage tanks over 2500 L, that supply oil burning equipment on properties under provincial jurisdiction are regulated under the BC Fire Code (BCFC).



## Bulletin: RESIDENTIAL HEATING OIL STORAGE TANKS

A provision in the BCFC states that an owner is required to follow good engineering practices when removing, abandoning in place, or temporarily taking out of service, their residential heating oil storage tank. Examples of good engineering practices are listed in the Appendix of the BCFC and include Part 9 of the [“Environmental Code of Practice for Aboveground and Underground Storage Tank Systems Containing Petroleum and Allied Petroleum Products”](#) published by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. For further information, contact the **Office of the Fire Commissioner at OFC@gov.bc.ca or 1-888-988-9488.**

The District of Peachland and Ministry of Environment do not specifically regulate residential heating oil storage tanks, **however all property owners in B.C. under provincial jurisdiction are legally responsible** for complying with the provincial Environmental Management Act. Under the Act, the current owner or a previous owner of the site may be responsible for cleaning up a contaminated site.

### **Do I need a permit from the District to remove an underground storage tank?**

No, you do not need permission or a permit from the District for removal of a storage tank.

### **Does the District provide compensation for the costs of removing an underground storage tank?**

No, the District is not accountable for tank removal or cleanup costs incurred by a property owner.

### **Instead of removing the storage tank, can I have the oil removed and the tank filled with sand?**

This is a procedure that will reduce the risk of contamination; however, it does not completely eliminate the source. For this reason, it may not be of satisfaction to someone who is inspecting the property or interested in buying it.

### **Does the District know if I have a heating oil storage tank?**

The District doesn't have property records of storage tank installations. The District is not responsible for confirming whether there is or is not a storage tank on your property.

### **Am I liable for contamination from a residential heating oil storage tank?**

If you buy a home with a heating oil tank, knowingly or not, you become potentially liable for any future cleanup costs.

### **What should I do if I want to remove a heating oil storage tank on my property?**

Unused or abandoned heating oil storage tanks should be properly decommissioned by a qualified contractor. A list of contractors can be found online or through the yellow pages. Requirements for the decommissioning of out-of-service storage tanks are described in the BCFC and the federal Storage Tank Systems for Petroleum Products and Allied Petroleum Products Regulations. A copy of the tank removal report should be sent to the District of Peachland Building Dept. for future reference.



## Bulletin: RESIDENTIAL HEATING OIL STORAGE TANKS

### Where can I get more Information?

- The BC Ministry of Environment has information on its website at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water>
- **Fact Sheet:** [Residential Heating Oil Storage Tanks - MOE](#)
- [BC Fire Code 2018](#)

***Please note:** Building Bulletins are prepared to provide convenient information for clients and should not be considered a replacement for reviewing the bylaw or associated legal documents. If there is any contradiction between this guide and relevant municipal bylaws and/or applicable codes, please refer to the bylaws and/or codes for legal authority.*

### Contact Information

#### District of Peachland

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT | 5806 Beach Ave Peachland BC V0H 1X7

BUILDING DEPARTMENT PH 250 767 3709

[building@peachland.ca](mailto:building@peachland.ca)