

■ Good Hands® Advice

Tips to help you be prepared and informed



Oil Tank Safety

Many homes, including 42% of those in Atlantic Canada, use oil tanks as a source for heat. Oil tank spills can be a concern for homeowners, and spills can occur for a variety of reasons. The main culprits are usually corrosion, improper installation, improper tank location, overfilling, and/or breaks in the fuel line. According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada – between 2001 and 2008, over 50% of reported oil tank spills in Atlantic Canada were due to corrosion. A higher volume of the units affected were between 6 to 15-years-old and located outdoors.

DID YOU KNOW?

- 1 million litres of drinking water can be contaminated by 1 litre of oil.
- Over time, a pin-sized hole in your oil tank can leak 1,000 litres of oil.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP KEEP YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND THE ENVIRONMENT SAFE:

Purchasing an Oil Tank

- Ensure the tank is certified by the Standards Council of Canada (CSA) or the Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC). This is usually indicated on the tank via a metal plate.
- Ensure your tank is installed by a qualified professional and meets your provincial/municipal building codes and regulations.
- Never buy a used oil tank and never transfer oil from an old tank into a new one.
- If possible, tanks should be installed indoors rather than outdoors.
- Know the expected life span of your tank and be aware if your province has regulations dictating when your tank must be replaced.

Maintaining an Oil Tank

- Have your tank inspected annually by a heating service professional.
- If your tank is not constructed or lined with non-corrosive materials, arrange to have any water and sludge removed annually.
- Look for any signs of damage and/or corrosion (rust lines and pit holes).
- Pay special attention to outdoor tanks that are installed on recently disturbed ground, i.e. newly constructed homes, and in areas subjected to flooding and/or high winds.

- If you must have your oil tank installed outdoors, it should be at least 15 metres (50 ft) away from a well, on a concrete slab or patio stones, in an area where it can be easily inspected and away from a wall (keeping a unit near a wall makes it more likely to rust).
- Be aware of any smells from your tank. There should be no odours from a properly installed indoor tank.
- Ensure your tank has a release barrier (drip tray) to help contain any leakage.

Remember: Homeowners are legally responsible for the proper maintenance of oil tanks on their property, for reporting any spills or leaks to the proper authorities, and to ensure spills or leaks are cleaned up in a timely fashion.

IN THE EVENT OF A SPILL OR LEAK:

You should contact the authorities immediately. Call one of these government agencies for immediate assistance.

New Brunswick: 1-800-565-1633
(Coast Guard, Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

Nova Scotia: 1-800-565-1633
(Coast Guard, Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

Quebec: 1-514-873-3454 (Dept of the Environment)

Ontario: 1-800-268-6060
(Spill Action Centre, Ministry of the Environment)

Alberta: 1-800-222-6514 (Ministry of the Environment)

For more helpful tips and advice, visit allstate.ca/learningcentre, contact your local Allstate Insurance Agency or call 1-800-allstate.

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