CLEAN UP PROCESS

You must immediately report evidence of a leak or spill, such as stains on the soil, puddles of oil, petroleum odors, etc., to the Northern Region Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Office. They can be reached at (703)583-3800. DEQ staff will then provide you with the appropriate procedures to follow. If required to implement a clean-up process, the work should be performed by a professional. These contractors are often listed as "Environmental Consultants" in the telephone yellow pages. A list of contractors may also be obtained from the DEQ Office. Work performed more than 24 hours prior to reporting a leak to DEQ is not eligible for reimbursement under DEQ's Virginia Petroleum Storage Tank Fund.

VIRGINIA PETROLEUM STORAGE TANK FUND

DEQ offers a reimbursement fund, the Virginia Petroleum Storage Tank Fund, from which a homeowner may be able to recover some of the cleanup costs associated with a leaking tank. VPSTF does not reimburse for tank removals, repair or replacement costs. It will only cover eligible cleanup costs. Before homeowners may request reimbursement, a financial responsibility requirement of $500/occurrence must be satisfied. This requirement is deducted from the total costs approved before any reimbursement payment is made. The total amount of reimbursement depends on following DEQ's directions, receiving pre-approval for conducting the cleanup and whether the costs you incur are within the usual rates reimbursed by DEQ. For more information, visit DEQs website at www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/LandProtectionRevitalization/PetroleumProgram.aspx or call the DEQ office at (703) 583-3800.

OIL TANK LEAKS & DRINKING WATER CONTAMINATION

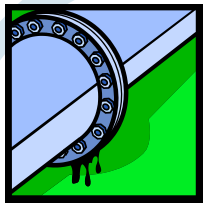
TOWN OF MIDDLEBURG, VIRGINIA

540-687-5152

Drinking Water (Surface & Ground) Contamination

Ground water contamination is nearly always the result of human activity. Almost any activity in which petroleum products are released to the environment, either intentionally or accidently, has the potential to pollute drinking water. When ground water becomes contaminated, it is difficult and expensive to clean up.

Contaminants may reach ground water from activities on the land surfaces and from sources below the land surface but above the water table, such as leaking petroleum storage systems (oil tanks).



Many homes have underground heating oil tanks. If an underground storage tank develops a leak, which commonly occurs as a tank ages and corrodes, its contents can contaminate the ground water. Abandoned underground tanks also pose a problem because their location is often unknown. Aboveground tanks pose a threat if a spill or leak occurs and adequate barriers for containment are not in place.

When an oil spill is discovered, it generally must be reported immediately to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's Regional Office. In addition, it must be immediately reported to the Town of Middleburg at (540) 687-5152.

OIL TANK LEAKS

Oil storage tanks are constantly breathing, allowing condensation to form inside the tank. The resulting accumulation of water can cause corrosion from the inside out. Consider having your heating contractor clean the inside of the tank every 5 years to avoid corrosion and leaks.

Most buried oil tanks are made of bare steel. When placed underground, the steel may react negatively to the surrounding soil and over-time will start to corrode. Leaks tend to start out as a very small hole in the tank, which causes its contents to leach into the surrounding soil, sometimes to a depth exceeding ten (10) feet. Faulty or corroded fuel lines can be another cause of an oil leak.

If there is a leak, the tank will need to be removed as leaks in oil tanks cannot be repaired. In addition, the soil will need to be remediated. For new tanks, consider a secondary containment enclosure.

Indoor tanks typically last 20-25 years and outdoor tanks typically last 15 years, at which point, they should be replaced. To replace your tank, contact your oil company. The estimated cost to replace a typical 275 gallon aboveground storage tank is $1,500.

A tank test or soil test are the most reliable methods of determining if your oil tank has a leak. A tank tightness test will evaluate whether the tank structure has a leak but will not identify whether oil has escaped into the surrounding soil. Only a soil test will do so. There are other less reliable methods for determining whether an oil tank leak exists as identified in the Homeowner's Monthly Tank Checklist.

HOMEOWNER'S MONTHLY TANK CHECKLIST

-Check fuel use. An increase may indicate a leak. Watch deliveries to prevent spills/ overfills.
-Check for water in the tank.
-Check oil/water separator drain, if exists.
-Check for signs of unexplained dead or withered vegetation in the area.
-Check to make sure the vent line is clear.
-Check to make sure the fill gauge (if exists) is functioning.
-Check to make sure overfill whistle (if exists) is functioning.
-Check the fill cap. If damaged/missing, replace immediately as oil can overflow if too much water enters the tank.
-If tank is an aboveground one, check the tank support for damage or rust.
-Check all pipeline connections and stoppers.
-Check your floor drain or sump pump for signs of petroleum, including odors.
-Check for signs of oil on your property (odors, sheen on water surfaces, visible puddles).
-Check for problems with the operation of your furnace.
-Check for petroleum vapors in your basement/crawlspace

DO NOT WAIT FOR YOUR TANK TO LEAK TO INSPECT OR PROTECT IT. THE TYPICAL CLEAN-UP COST FOR SPILLS CAN RANGE FROM $10,000-$50,000.