

Home Heating Oil Tanks

What kinds of regulations apply to my home heating oil tank?

Home heating oil tanks are considered non-regulated, non-commercial underground storage tanks (USTs) that are exempt from some of the laws that apply to commercial USTs. (e.g.,). Even though home heating oil tanks are not required to have leak detection monitoring, corrosion protection, or spill and overfill control, sampling and cleanup regulations may apply if there is a leak or spill from your tank. **15 A NCAC 02L .0404(b)**

What do I do with a home heating oil tank that is no longer being used?

Home heating oil tanks are exempt from the “closure” requirements. “Closure” of USTs means removing the tank from the ground or filling the empty tanks with a solid, inert material such as sand. Even though these closure requirements do not apply to home heating oil tanks, a tank owner is advised to empty a tank once it is no longer being used in order to limit the chances of a release. Tanks should not be filled with water. Although it is not a requirement to remove old heating oil tanks, potential buyers are sometimes reluctant to purchase property with USTs; so removal may be a good idea in the interests of resale.

If I choose to remove my home heating oil tank, what are the requirements?

Some local fire inspectors’ offices regulate USTs, so you should contact your local office prior to removal. You do not need to contact a North Carolina Division of Waste Management (DWM) UST Section office unless you discover signs of a leak, spill, or contamination.

What do I do if I discover contamination?

Notify your local DWM UST Section regional office within 24 hours if you discover signs of a leak, spill, or contamination such as stains on the soil, strong petroleum odors or puddles of oil.

Please refer to this web document ([https://ncdenr.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Waste Management/DWM/UST/Corrective Action/Regional Office Contact Map.pdf](https://ncdenr.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Waste%20Management/DWM/UST/Corrective%20Action/Regional%20Office%20Contact%20Map.pdf)) for telephone numbers and addresses of the DWM UST Section regional offices. If you are responsible for the contamination, your local DWM UST Section office will provide you with the information for sampling and cleanup, if required.

Who may be responsible for cleanup of contamination?

Primarily, the “statutory tank owner” may be responsible for cleaning up the contamination, if required. Who the “statutory tank owner” is depends upon when the tank was last used. If it was last used before November 8, 1984 then the last party who used that UST is considered the tank owner (even if that party no longer owns the property.) However, if that tank was used on or after November 8, 1984, anyone that owned the tank would be considered the tank owner even if that person never used it.

If I am responsible for cleaning up contamination caused by a home heating oil tank, what do I do after I report the contamination?

First, determine how much contamination is present. The DWM UST Section regional staff can help you determine what further steps are needed ([see map document for addresses and telephone numbers](#)). If further action is required, you will likely have to hire a professional to assess the site and clean up the contamination.

What kinds of companies do this sort of work?

Many companies do environmental work. Typically, they can be found in the yellow pages of a telephone book under “Environmental Consultants.” The DWM UST Section provides a list where companies that do environmental work can provide their information. This list is called the “UST Service Provider Listing” it is located at <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/waste-management/ust/service-provider-listing>. When choosing a company, we recommend getting several estimates and references. Site assessments and cleanup work must be conducted under the responsible charge of a licensed geologist or professional engineer.

What are the requirements if the leak is from an above ground home heating oil tank?

If a leak from an above ground tank is discovered, it must be reported to your regional DWM office within 24 hours. If cleanup is required, your regional DWM UST Section office will tell you how to proceed.

Where do I go if I have more questions?

Please refer to the [map](#) for telephone numbers and addresses of the DWM regional offices. Ask to speak to someone in the UST Section. You may also refer to the UST guidance web page at <http://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/waste-management/ust/guidance-documents> or contact the UST central office at:

NCDEQ
Division of Waste Management - UST Section
1646 Mail Service Center
Raleigh NC 27699-1646
(919) 707-8171

The purpose of this brochure is for general guidance. More specific information can be found in 15A NCAC 2L, G.S. 143-215.83-85, and the most recent site assessment and cleanup guidance issued by the UST Section. Although this brochure only addresses home heating oil underground storage tanks, the same basic requirements apply to small (1,100 gallons or less) farm and residential motor fuel tanks.