

## PROPER MANAGEMENT OF HOME HEATING FUEL TANKS



Heating fuel tanks located at individual homes have the potential to cause serious environmental problems for the community and local residents if not properly managed. Every year hundreds of thousands of dollars are wasted on site clean ups because leaking tanks were not fixed or fuel spills were not noticed. According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada total damages have exceeded \$12 million a year in Atlantic Canada alone where home heating oil has been much more common than in other parts of Canada.

### WHAT IS THE RISK?

Home heating fuel tanks have the potential to leak or spill and cause contamination of the soil around the house and possibly ruin local groundwater. Heating fuel in the soil can get into the house through sewer lines or foundation cracks and can affect the air quality in the home.

The purpose of this brochure is to provide residents with a reference tool that offers best management practices and tips to help make sure the tanks they have are managed in a safe and proactive manner.

### WHAT DO HOME OWNERS NEED TO KNOW?

All home heating fuel tanks should meet some minimum safety requirements to ensure it is appropriate to use. Standards for home heating tanks on reserve lands are dictated by the National Fire Code of Canada, and local provincial regulatory agencies. First Nations and the government of Canada have agreed that First Nations should not be subject to lower standards than the rest of Canadians therefore whatever provincial standards apply off reserve should apply on reserve unless there is a more stringent piece of federal legislation.

#### Is it properly constructed?

Tanks should be installed and labelled to show that it meets the national construction standards such as National Standard of Canada's

*CAN/ULC S602 Aboveground steel tanks for the storage of combustible liquids intended to be used as Heating and/or generator fuels.*

or

Underwriter laboratories of Canada ULC/ORD C80 *aboveground non-metallic tanks for fuel oil*

#### Was your tank installed properly?

Certified tank installers follow the National Fire Code and Canadian Standards Association CSA B-139 *Installation Code for oil burning equipment* (latest edition)

### Conduct tank inspections

Regular tank inspections can occur as part of the fuel providers service. As a resident it is in your interest to check your home heating tank for your self. Good tank management should include the following.

Look for obvious signs of damage like dents, leaks on corners or welded areas, rusty spots or pinched lines, cracked gages, poor supports.

Check your tank before and after each fill to see if you notice any leaks once it is full.

Make sure the tank is always well supported and level. Uneven tanks can tip or be subject to stress that may corrode the metal.

Keep grass, vegetation and other organic materials and debris away from the tank as this can contribute to corrosion.

Have the oil filter on the tank changed every year.

During summer months keep the tank near full to reduce the potential for condensation to develop.

For a home heating tank inspection contact your local administration office.

### TANK ISSUES

Home heating fuel storage tanks are a common consideration in most community housing budgets. Who pays to fuel the tank and how often is it filled? Pay attention to changes in the heating fuel use in your home. If fills are more frequent it can indicate a slow release.

## WHAT DO WE DO WITH DEFICIENT TANKS?

Tanks that are leaking should be reported to Environment Canada. Your fuel supplier should be notified immediately, since they can help you to assess the problem and take corrective measures. Sites that have experienced a spill should be reported as soon as possible and cleaned up to ensure contamination does not enter into the groundwater or create fumes in the house.

## WHO PAYS FOR NEW TANKS?

This is determined within each community differently. Contact your housing department to find out how this is managed if you have concerns about the heating fuel tank at your home. It is much cheaper to fix, replace or upgrade a tank compared to cleaning up a contaminated site.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Content for this brochure is consistent with the Nova Scotia department and Labour environment and Natural Areas Management "Home Owners Guide to Heating Oil Tank Systems". For more information refer to [www.gov.ns.ca](http://www.gov.ns.ca).

An aboriginal training guide for First Nations has also been developed and can be found at [www.gov.nu.ca/environment](http://www.gov.nu.ca/environment).

If you have any questions please call your local housing department.

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

**To report a fuel spill call  
Environment Canada:**

**Emergency Response**

**Maritimes (Halifax): 1(800) 565-1633**

**Newfoundland (St. John's): 1(800) 563-9089**



# ATLANTIC REGION FIRST NATIONS HOME HEATING FUEL STORAGE TANK MANAGEMENT

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS BROCHURE

