

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF OAK BAY

FIRE DEPARTMENT

1703 MONTEREY AVENUE (250-592-9121)

Guidelines for Underground Oil Storage Tanks (UST) - Private Dwellings

The use of underground oil storage tanks for furnace oil was a common practice until the late 1950s. Many properties within the District of Oak Bay contain underground oil storage tanks which have been taken out of service and abandoned when a new above ground tank or natural gas service/electricity was installed.

Abandoned oil storage tanks may contain contaminated hazardous (oil/water) waste, which may be released/leak to the environment as the tank continues to age and deteriorate.

The Installation Code for oil burning equipment (CAN/CSA B139); grants the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) the authority to establish requirements for oil storage tanks which have been removed from service. The Oak Bay Fire Department is the AHJ for the District of Oak Bay and requires that all underground oil tanks being inerted or removed must be inspected and documented. Inspection/Administrative fees may apply.

Underground oil storage tanks may be:

1. Rendered Inert or
2. Removed.

NOTE: Many Financial Institutions and Insurance Companies are requiring that Underground Oil Tanks be removed from properties in order to grant/continue funding and/or insurance. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that property owners' takes steps to have their Underground Oil Storage Tanks removed.

At any time that site contamination is discovered, reported or becomes evident during the Inerting or Removal of an Underground Oil Storage Tank, the B.C. Ministry of Environment (MOE) will be contacted by Oak Bay Fire Department. All Contaminated sites become the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment as the Authority Having Jurisdiction.

For any contaminated sites, The Ministry (MOE) will require that property owners retain the services of an Environmental Consultant to investigate and remediate the site and report their findings and remediation activities to MOE.

UST Inerting:

Inerting of an Underground Oil Storage Tank means: Cutting the oil tank open, pumping out all oil and oily waste water, thoroughly cleaning the interior of the tank; and then, following inspection/approval, filling the tank with clean sand.

It is recommended that only qualified companies/tradespersons perform UST Inerting. (The B.C. Ministry of Environment (MOE) regulates the transportation and disposal of all "special wastes", including waste oil, sludge etc.).

The qualified tradesperson/company will contact the Oak Bay Fire Department for a site inspection. The Oak Bay Fire Department will evaluate the tank and site. If, at the time of inspection, no obvious or suspected site contamination is evident, approval will be granted for filling the tank with clean sand.

If any contamination is suspected or becomes evident during any part of the Inerting process, a “STOP WORK ORDER” will be issued by Oak Bay Fire Department. The contaminated site will be reported to MOE. MOE then becomes the Authority Having Jurisdiction. An Environmental Consultant will then be required to investigate/remediate the site and report to MOE.

Please contact the Oak Bay Fire Prevention Division if you have any further questions regarding the Inerting process for Underground Oil Storage Tanks.

UST Removals:

Removal of an Underground Oil Storage Tank requires that the oil tank is first cut open and pumped of all oil and oily waste water, then interior is then thoroughly cleaned; **once completed the underground tank is removed from the ground.**

Oak Bay Fire Department MUST be on site to witness the removal of the UST and to inspect the site.

It is recommended that only qualified companies/tradespersons perform UST removals. (The B.C. Ministry of Environment (MOE) regulates the transportation and disposal of all “special wastes”, including waste oil, sludge etc.).

If any contamination is suspected or becomes evident during any part of the Removal process, a “STOP WORK ORDER” will be issued by Oak Bay Fire Department. The contaminated site will be reported to MOE. MOE then becomes the Authority Having Jurisdiction. An Environmental Consultant will then be required to investigate/remediate the site and report to MOE.

Please contact the Oak Bay Fire Prevention Division if you have any further questions regarding the Removal process for Underground Oil Storage Tanks.

Responsibility:

Property owners are responsible for all underground storage tanks and hazardous waste which is released/leaks on their properties. Significant costs have been incurred by property owners to clean up hazardous waste spills. The Oak Bay Fire Department recommends that you contact the Fire Prevention office to obtain information regarding the oil storage tank(s) located on your property.

More Information:

B.C. Ministry of Environment (MOE) http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/remediation/fact_sheets/pdf/fs21.pdf