

Oil Tank Inspections



Locations, installations and conditions vary from home to home.

- **Inside**

- Exposed
- Concealed
- In Basement
- In garage
- Signs of leaks

- **Outside**

- Buried
- Exposed
- Covered
- Concealed
- Signs of leaks

Some conditions can have a detrimental effect on the longevity, environmental concerns, accessibility and your ability to observe and report on these conditions. A lack of availability to observe must have the reasons stated in your report and if possible, photos to further document your justifications. Proper recommendations must be included in your report, if warranted, to justify the need for further evaluation, repair or replacement. Your expertise, based on your training and experience, is in the observations. Do not try to solve the problem or recommend a "fix". When conditions prevent observation, don't ignore the situation, make the call for further evaluation by a qualified tank or heating contractor. Verbal statements not transcribed into your report can be forgotten or misinterpreted by your client or an agent. When it comes down to indecisiveness, misstatements or he said she said, you are the one to be judged at fault.. Do not fall into this trap..

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The Inside inspection

Many situations may exist on the interior that you may need to document and report on. Is the tank partially or fully concealed, which can hinder your observations. What is the present condition? Is the tank in newer condition or has someone just painted over the rust. Is the tank rusty? Is it patched? Are there signs of or actual leaks present? Most tanks in basements are up against foundation walls. Are the tanks in contact with the concrete or just too close to observe the back side. Tanks should be elevated off the floor and have nothing in contact with them. Are the fill and vent pipe threads properly sealed or are there signs of leaks at the threads coating the top of the tank with fuel oil or are they running down the tank onto the floor. Is the location of the fuel filter at the tank, at the burner, is it leaking or is there no fuel filter installed?



Some Rust



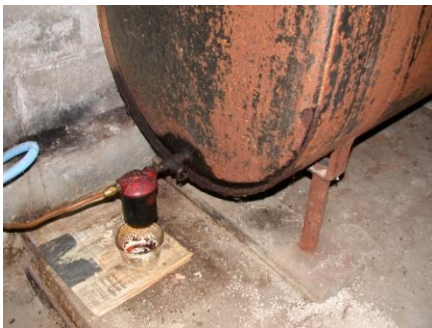
Partially Rusted



Fully Rusted



Both pictures above show leaking pipe threads



Looks like it could become a leaker



Abandon Tank in basement



Bottom extremely rusty & damp



#1-May be a leak from oil filter change



#2- Small leak?



#3- Disaster waiting to happen

An oil spill absorbent such as “Speedi-Dry” is used by heating contractors to clean up small spills which can happen when changing the fuel filter or disconnecting the fuel line during a tune up when accessing the electrodes and nozzle. Technicians also have a powdered “odor eliminator” which will dissipate any residual fuel oil odors.

Photo #1 The technician should have cleaned up the mess and put down new absorbent to make sure it is not an active leak and to absorb any residual oil from the floor.

Photo #2 Lack of quality workmanship by the technician to clean up & make sure it is not a small dripping leak.

Photo #3 As you will see in the next photo, this was an active leak. It appeared the home owner was supplying a temporary fix with “speedi-dry”. Read more below



Same tank as in Photo #3

This tank was actively leaking as we observed oil dripping into the $\frac{3}{4}$ full white bucket. The fuel filter side & bottom of the tank was wet. The floor was covered with black, wet oil soaked “speedi-dry”. The tank was

beyond its life and needed to be pumped out and replaced immediately. This was an environmental disaster about to happen. Any attempt to fill the tank, in our opinion, would have blown out the seams or rusted side & bottom and filled the basement with fuel oil. The real estate agents response was she would make sure the tank was patched. Question of the day: What type of patch will adhere to a rust covers, oil soaked material?



Both sides of this tank were patched.

Why would you settle for a patched tank. This tank was behind a finished basement wall and not very accessible. However our recommendation was to have it replaced. The picture below is the old disconnected boiler that the homeowner left for the buyer. Our added recommendation was to have the old boiler removed when they the sellers replaced the oil tank.



Other than being cheap, why would you leave old replaced equipment in your home, let alone for a potential buyer to be stuck with it. What else are you leaving?



Concealed 550 gallon tank in a basement

This tank was only observed by holding a camera above the top of a partition wall in a basement of a home built in the 1830's. Obviously the tank was not installed then, probably sometime in the early 1900's. We were unable to observe any other conditions as this area was inaccessible. The recommendation was to have it made accessible and evaluated by a qualified tank or heating contractor.



Then there is nothing like an active leaking fuel line.
I guess it will eventually stop.



Exposed fuel line needs to be protected.

The Outside Inspection

Fill pipe & vent pipes are always located in various places on the exterior of the building or in the yard.



Vent pipes needs to be extended higher



Vent pie is 6' higher than fill pipe but may be Restricted by siding



Exterior exposed twin tanks



Fill pipe for buried fuel tank in flower bed



How do you fill this without a spill?



Don't ignore copper tubing coming in from underground!

Underground fuel tanks are not illegal and are presently being used and installed. There are newer regulations that must be adhered to in regards to buried and aboveground exposed tanks. Most banks and mortgage companies will not issue a mortgage until they are removed. Some towns do prohibit installation and mandate removal if most water supplies are by wells. Most of these rules and regulation can be obtained from the governing jurisdiction in the local ordinances issued. There are many other conditions you will come across during an inspection including but not limited to fuel tanks present in detached garages and tool sheds with buried copper lines into the basement which may not be marked. Non properly supported tanks and tanks with bent legs can and will tip over causing a very expensive environmental cleanup.

Do not hesitate to make a call. If it looks wrong or hazardous, report that it needs to be further evaluated by a qualified professional. Don't open yourself up to liability as a co-defendant. It's our job as inspectors to protect our client and report on what we see & don't see, that's why they hired us.

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Web sites of the month:

To locate local EPA-accredited RRP training providers using EPA's search tool:

http://cfpub.epa.gov/flpp/searchrrp_training.htm

Information on firm certification: <http://www.epa.gov/getleadsafe>

More information on EPA's lead program: <http://www.epa.gov/lead>



MassDEP

What can contaminate a well?

Some contaminants are naturally occurring from features found in the rocks and soils of Massachusetts. These include substances like bacteria, radon, arsenic, uranium, and other minerals.

Other contaminants find their way onto the land from human activities. On a large scale, industrial/commercial activities, improper waste disposal, manure storage, road salting, and fuel spills can introduce hazardous substances to the ground. Typical residential activities, such as the application of

fertilizers and pesticides, fueling of lawn equipment, and disposal of household chemicals can contaminate the ground when done improperly. Even an on-site residential septic system can pose a threat to your well.

When should my well water be tested?

MassDEP recommends that prospective homebuyers test the water in a home with a private well before purchase. Once you've purchased the home, the interval between water quality tests can generally be in terms of years if the well is properly constructed and located in a safe area. However, the following conditions would prompt more frequent testing:

- Heavily developed areas with land uses that handle hazardous chemicals.
- Recent well construction activities or repairs. MassDEP recommends taking a bacterial test after any well repair or pump or plumbing modification, but only after disinfection and substantial flushing of the water system.
- Contaminant concentrations above state or federal standards found in earlier testing.
- Noticeable variations in quality like a water quality change after a heavy rain, extended drought, or an unexplained change in a previously trouble-free well (i.e. funny taste, cloudy appearance, etc.).

When taking any sample, MassDEP recommends that it be taken after a heavy rainstorm. These events tend to highlight conditions of improper well construction or poor soil filtration.



The New EPA Lead-Safe Rule

A letter from IAQA Executive Director

On April 22, 2008, EPA issued a rule requiring the use of lead-safe practices and other actions aimed at preventing lead poisoning. Under the rule, starting on April 22, 2010, contractors performing renovation, repair and painting projects that disturb lead-based paint in homes, child care facilities, and schools built before 1978 must be certified and must follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination. Understand that after April 22, 2010, federal law will require you to be certified and to use lead-safe work practices!

Those most affected by the EPA rule say contractors aren't ready. On Tuesday of this week, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) petitioned EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson to delay the rule. NAHB cited a need for more trainers and a faster certification process, inaccurate test kits and a lack of preparedness on the part of the EPA.

NAHB Remodelers Chairman Donna Shirey said, "Remodelers are working hard to get trained and certified under the EPA's lead rule. But we continue to receive calls that they can't find training and are waiting to hear back from the EPA on certification. It's incredibly frustrating that despite our diligence, remodelers will be penalized after April 22 because of the EPA's failure to plan."

The petition detailed four reasons why EPA should delay the rule under the "good cause" provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act.

1. Lack of EPA-accredited trainers. NAHB says the agency only began to accredit training providers for the required eight hours of classes last fall and by the end of March there were 190. But four states have no training providers and six others have only one or two.
2. Not enough certified firms. NAHB says the EPA currently lacks the resources and infrastructure to inform the regulated community, process applications in a timely manner, and enable firms to comply.
3. Not enough certified renovators. According to NAHB, EPA estimates that 235,916 people must be certified as renovators upon the effective date of the rule. As of last week, EPA estimated that 75,000 contractors had attended an approved training course.
4. Inaccurate test kits. NAHB says commercially available test kits designed to ensure that there is no lead paint in the home are inaccurate between 42 percent and 78 percent of the time.

I spoke this morning to an official from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). They have been lobbying EPA to extend the start date for months and say they are not optimistic. Their president met with the Office of Management and Budget a few weeks ago to plead their case there, but NARI hasn't received a response from OMB since. IAQA staff also spoke with NAHB officials this week and they are equally pessimistic about any delay to the April 22 deadline.

Almost appearing to be in defense of the NAHB petition, yesterday the EPA announced it expects more than 125,000 renovation and remodeling contractors to be trained in lead-safe work practices by April 22. The agency says it is on target to implement the Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule on April 22, 2010.

To date, EPA says it has certified 190 training providers who have conducted more than 4,900 courses. EPA says an estimated 100,000 people in the construction and remodeling industries have been trained in lead-safe work practices. Based on current estimates, EPA expects more than 125,000 contractors to be certified by the April 22 deadline. EPA anticipates that many more contractors and renovators will seek and obtain training after the deadline.

If you're a contractor and you aren't certified, you need to act fast. For a list of certified trainers check out the EPA website at www.epa.gov, or check out the list of approved trainers through the National Center for Health Housing at www.nchh.org.

Sincerely,
Glenn Fellman, Executive Director
Indoor Air Quality Association



Protecting Your Home From Future Flood Damage

Release Date: April 20, 2010

Release Number: 1895-020

[» More Information on Massachusetts Severe Storm and Flooding](#)

[» En Español](#)

ANDOVER, Mass. -- As cleanup continues in the aftermath of the heavy rains and flooding that struck Massachusetts during late March, state and federal officials urge disaster victims to take measures to prevent the damage from happening again.

Recovery officials point out that it is safer, cheaper, and ultimately much easier to limit future destruction than to repair it afterward. The rebuilding phase of a disaster is the ideal time to consider ways to limit future damage.

There are simple, inexpensive ways to prevent or reduce future flood damage. FEMA calls such actions hazard mitigation.

While some mitigation measures such as the elevation of buildings are costly long-term projects, there are simple home improvements that residents of flood-prone areas can make to help themselves.

Although many recommended measures require employing a contractor, some can be accomplished by a competent do-it-yourselfer. It is important, however, to talk to your local building officials before you start any work. They can provide information on local standards and building codes.

Several suggestions to keep damages from happening are:

- **Relocate or elevate water heaters, furnaces, and major appliances.** Water heaters, furnaces and appliances, such as washers and dryers in the basement, can be elevated. Place them on a masonry or pressure-treated wood base at least 12 inches above the previous high-water mark or your home's projected flood elevation. Appliances can also be moved to the first or second floor. Some heating systems can be suspended from the basement ceiling.
- **Elevate or relocate electrical systems.** Electrical panel boxes, circuit breakers, wall switches, and wall outlets should be relocated at least 12 inches above your home's projected flood elevation. In some cases, they can even be moved to a higher floor. A licensed electrician familiar with local codes should be hired to do this work. An uninterrupted electrical supply will allow the homeowner to move back to the home more quickly after a flood.
- **Install a septic backflow valve.** Flooded septic systems can force sewage back into the home. Not only is this an unpleasant experience, it also presents a health risk. Backflow valves can be installed inside or outside the structure but must conform to local building codes.

- **Build interior and exterior floodwalls.** A watertight masonry floodwall can be constructed to enclose furnaces, utilities and appliances on the lowest floor of the building. On the outside, a similar wall could be constructed around the perimeter of the basement opening to keep water from entering.
- **Anchor your fuel tank.** Fuel tanks, either inside or outside the home, should be anchored to prevent them from overturning or breaking loose in a flood. Metal straps and bolts should be non-corrosive, and wood structural supports should be pressure treated.

Funding for hazard mitigation projects may be available to victims of the recent floods who qualify for U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest loans. SBA disaster loans may be increased up to 20 percent to cover the cost of improvements that will protect property from damages of the same kind in the future.

Since the March 29 presidential declaration, more than 21,000 residents of the seven declared counties (Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk and Worcester) have registered for disaster assistance by calling the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at **800-621-FEMA (3362)** or 800-462-7585 (TTY) or by enrolling online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov .

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders and to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Photos of the month

How to detect roof & flashing leaks when there are no stains on the ceilings



You make the call!

Federal Aid Programs For State Of Connecticut Disaster Recovery

Release Date: April 23, 2010

Release Number: HQ-10-077Factsheet

[» More Information on Connecticut Severe Storms and Flooding](#)

[Http://www.fema.gov/news/event.fema?id=12689](http://www.fema.gov/news/event.fema?id=12689)

Following is a summary of key federal disaster aid programs that can be made available *as needed and warranted* under President Obama's major disaster declaration issued for the State of Connecticut

Assistance for the State and Affected Local Governments Can Include *as Required*:

- Payment of not less than 75 percent of the eligible costs for repairing or replacing damaged public facilities, such as roads, bridges, utilities, buildings, schools, recreational areas and similar publicly owned property, as well as certain private non-profit organizations engaged in community service activities. (*Source: FEMA funded, state administered.*)
- Payment of not less than 75 percent of the eligible costs for removing debris from public areas and for emergency measures taken to save lives and protect property and public health. (*Source: FEMA funded, state administered.*)
- Payment of not more than 75 percent of the approved costs for hazard mitigation projects undertaken by state and local governments to prevent or reduce long-term risk to life and property from natural or technological disasters. (*Source: FEMA funded, state administered.*)

How to Apply for Assistance:

- Application procedures for local governments will be explained at a series of federal/state applicant briefings with locations to be announced in the affected area by recovery officials. Approved public repair projects are paid through the state from funding provided by FEMA and other participating federal agencies.

FEMA's mission is to support our first responders and ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

NEWS from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Wood Burning Stoves Recalled by SCAN Andersen Due to Injury Hazard

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

Name of Product: SCAN Andersen 10 Wood Burning Stove

Units: About 200

Importer: Jotul North America, of Gorham, Maine

Manufacturer: Jøtul AS, Fredrikstad, Norway

Hazard: The stove's door can dislodge and fall from its hinges, posing a risk of injury to consumers.

Incidents/Injuries: Three incidents were reported to the firm including one report of a bruised foot.

Description: The recalled SCAN Andersen 10 wood burning stoves have serial numbers from 7951 through 8267. The serial number is printed on a label applied to the rear panel of the stove. These units are freestanding, black, cast iron stoves with a single front load door with glass pane. Dimensions are 35" H x 26 2/8" W x 16" D.

Sold at: Company dealers and distributors throughout the U.S. and Canada from March, 2009 to February, 2010.

Manufactured in: Norway

Remedy: Consumers should contact their dealer for a hinge replacement kit and to arrange for a free professional installation.

Consumer Contact: For more information contact Jotul North America at (800) 797-5912, ext. 108 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday or visit the firm's recall web page at www.jotul.com



CPSC is still interested in receiving incident or injury reports that are either directly related to this product recall or involve a different hazard with the same product. Please tell us about it by visiting <https://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/incident.aspx>

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Course Developed By Bernie Caliendo (former CT Licensing Board Chairman 03-08) with input and review by Attorney Kent Mawhinney

This course meets the minimum requirements as set forth by the CT Home Inspection Licensing Board

The benefits and savings of this course is a no brainer!

Although not required for interns, some material in this course may contain material in the CT Law Exam required to obtain your license.

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Join IPG now, then take the required CT Law Course online at the member's price of only \$35 and enjoy all our membership benefits!

Massachusetts Home Inspectors License Renewal Notice

License renewal is due by May 31st. Remember to have the mandated 4 hour Standards of Practice course and the 1 hour Ethics course along with the required 7 hours of additional continuing education completed.

[Visit our web site to apply or download a membership application](#)

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