

Home heating oil and drinking water don't mix

Home heating oil contains a number of compounds that can be hazardous to human health. BTEX (benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene and xylenes) as well as petroleum hydrocarbons (PHC) have been known to cause cancer, birth defects and can adversely affect respiration, immune and nervous systems. PHC can cause damage to organs, eyes and blood.

Health is not the only thing that can be affected. If there is an oil spill on your property, home heating oil can enter groundwater or surface water and contaminate municipal or private wells. The costs of cleaning up after the spill can be significant and your insurance may not cover all the expenses. For all these reasons, the Clean Water Act and the local Source Protection Plans identify home heating oil as a potential threat to drinking water.

Preventing oil leaks and spills

- Have your tank installed by a certified contractor
- Ask your delivery person if the overfill whistle is working
- On a regular basis, visually inspect the tank and its surrounding area especially the supply lines and pipes



- Make sure the tank is away from any drains or holes to prevent spills from escaping into the environment/sewer system
- Install an overfill protection device and drip trays for extra protection
- Ensure your tank is easily accessible for inspections
- Have your tank inspected annually by an oil burner technician
- When installing a new tank, choose a double walled tank, preferably with an alarm
- If your tank is outside or in your garage keep a proper distance between the tank and moving vehicles
- Empty all unused tanks - If you have an abandoned tank, especially a prohibited underground tank, remove the tank and all contaminated soil

Fuel tank warning signs

- Tanks legs are unstable or on a shaky foundation
- Evidence of rust, weeping, wet spots or dents
- Drips or signs of leaking
- Your vent is clogged with ice, snow or debris like insect nests

FACT SHEET 8

HOME HEATING OIL & FUEL



- You are using more fuel than normal
- Signs of oil in nearby watercourses or wetlands
- Evidence of dead vegetation near tank or down slope from it
- Spillage around the fill or vent pipes

If your tank is leaking

- Make sure you and your family are safe

- Ensure all sources of ignition and other risks are removed, if it is safe to do so
- Contain the spill as best as you can, using whatever materials you have available (pails, rags, newspapers, kitty litter, absorbent pads, plastic sheeting etc.)
- Notify the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change's Spills Action Centre at 1-800-268-6060 (24 hours)

- Contact your fuel oil supplier or registered contractor
- Collect oil, contaminated materials and soil in plastic bags or pails and properly dispose of all materials (contact your municipality for more information)
- Contact your insurance agent
- If in a drinking water vulnerable area, contact the Risk Management Official for your municipality

In Wellington County

The Source Protection Plan policies governing home heating oil tanks vary widely across the County. To find out more about policies in your area, contact the local township office or go online to www.wellingtonwater.ca.

For more information, contact:

Wellington Source Water Protection,
7444 Wellington Road 21, Elora, ON
Tel: 1-844-383-9800

Email: sourcewater@centrewellington.ca

Website: www.wellingtonwater.ca

Or your local municipal office.

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