

# Small Petroleum Tank Abandonments & Removals

## Frequently Asked Questions

NOTE: Tanks **exceeding 1,100 gallons** in capacity, or small tanks located at facilities regulated under Article XV Nassau County Public Health Ordinance, cannot be permanently closed using this system. *Please contact the Office of Toxic & Hazardous Material Regulation at (516) 227-9691 for information regarding the permanent closure of these tanks.*

### What are small petroleum storage tanks?

Small petroleum storage tanks are individual heating oil tanks or tank systems that accommodate 1,100 gallons or less in capacity. These tanks are used to store the fuel oil utilized to heat and/or provide hot water to private homes and small businesses. They can be classified as an:

1. **above-ground storage tank (AST)**, which means more than 90% of the tank's volume is located above the final ground surface. They are typically found inside the home, in basements and crawl spaces, or next to the home, outside on a concrete pad.
2. **underground storage tank (UST)**, which means 10% or more of the tank's volume is located below the final ground surface. They are typically found buried outside the home, somewhere on the property.

### Why is it important to properly "close" an old petroleum storage tank?

Because storage tanks are subject to corrosion, equipment malfunctions and other issues, petroleum leaks from ASTs and USTs can result in accidental environmental contamination of the soil and the groundwater in Nassau County. Chemicals from fuel oil has been found in shallow wells and can pollute the drinking water supply. Additionally, improper closure of ASTs and associated piping can result in unintended delivery of oil into basements and onto property resulting in COSTLY clean-up efforts by the homeowner and adverse health effects from oil vapors. Homeowner insurance policies can differ in their coverage of small petroleum storage tank spill remediation – some provide spill clean-up assistance while others provide no coverage at all.

### How do I know if my petroleum storage tank needs to be abandoned or removed?

If your tank is 30 years or older, it may be in danger of failing and leaking. All ASTs should be removed and properly disposed of when they are being replaced for any reason, including gas conversion. USTs may be removed from the ground and inspected or abandoned through a

closure in place procedure utilizing an approved fill material when they are being replaced or for gas conversion. Any leak or releases to the environment, evidenced by loss of product, visible leaks or contamination of soil, should be reported to the *NYS Department of Environmental Conservation* through their NYS Spill Hotline 1-800-457-7362.

### **Whose responsibility is it to report the closure of a small petroleum storage tank?**

While some contractors may notify the NCDH of a future tank closure or tank closure completion, as a home or small business owner, you are ultimately responsible to report the closure of any petroleum storage tank on your property.

### **What is the procedure for the REMOVAL of an AST or UST?**

Small petroleum tank removals can be completed by a contractor or a property owner following the appropriate protocol. Inspections should be scheduled with the NCDH either [online](#) or [by mail](#) *at least 7 days prior to tank removal*. The filing fee for tank removal inspection is \$90 and can be conveniently paid online via credit card, through the mail by check or money order, or in person by check, money order, or credit card.

On the scheduled date of removal, all residual oil and sludge must be removed from the tank. Any waste product removed must be disposed of in accordance with all local, state and federal regulations. The tank and all associated piping are then removed or permanently cut and capped, plugged or sealed. Disposal of an old tank requires testing to ensure the tank is free of vapors and puncturing it with holes to render it unfit for future liquid storage.

Completion of all small tank removals requires an inspection by the NCDH to assess whether there has been any environmental contamination and to ensure proper closure of the storage tank and all associated piping.

### **What is the procedure for the ABANDONMENT of a non-leaking UST?**

Small petroleum tank abandonment can be completed by a contractor or a property owner following the appropriate protocol and should be scheduled with the NCDH either [online](#) or [by mail](#) *at least 7 days prior to tank abandonment*. The filing fee for tank abandonment is \$70 and can be conveniently paid online via credit card, through the mail by check or money order, or in person by money order, check or credit card.

On the scheduled date of abandonment, all residual oil and sludge should be removed from the tank. Any waste product removed must be disposed of in accordance with all local, state and federal regulations. The tank is subsequently filled with sand, concrete slurry or an approved foam product. All associated piping is then removed or permanently cut below grade and capped, plugged or sealed. The NCDH must confirm proper abandonment of the tank through inspection or consultation with the contractor.

### **Why is it important to file with the NCDH?**

All tank removals and abandonments must be reported to the NCDH and completed in accordance with Article XI of the Nassau County Public Health Ordinance to ensure the health and safety of the public and the groundwater supply. Improper closure of ASTs and associated piping can result in unintended delivery of oil into basements and onto property resulting in COSTLY clean-up efforts by the homeowner and possible adverse health effects from exposure to oil vapors. Additionally, many realtors, lawyers and home inspectors now request documentation of proper tank closures, both removals and abandonments, prior to home sales.

### **As a contractor or property owner, how do I know if a small petroleum storage tank ever had a previously reported leak?**

All reportable petroleum oil leaks or environmental contamination must be reported to and managed by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Records of all reported petroleum and chemical spill incidents can be accessed by searching the [NYS DEC Spill Incidents Database](#).

### **How much does it cost to file a storage tank closure with the Nassau County Health Dept.?**

The fee for **tank abandonment** is \$70 and for **tank removal** is \$90. Fees can be easily be paid online via credit card, through the mail by check or money order, or in person by check, money order or credit card.

### **What days can I schedule a tank removal or abandonment?**

Tank removals and abandonments should be filed with the NCDH *7 days in advance* and can be scheduled Monday through Friday, excluding major holidays.

### **What if the date of my scheduled tank abandonment or removal changes?**

The NCDH should be notified of any changes to the scheduled date of tank removals and abandonments so that inspections can be arranged accordingly and to maintain accurate record of tank closures.

### **Can I install or replace my tank with a new underground small petroleum storage tank?**

Following the proper closure of any old or unused small petroleum storage tanks, installation of new USTs can be completed by a contractor or property owner employing the appropriate protocols. New tanks must be in accordance with Article XI of the Nassau County Public Health

Ordinance, which requires sufficient structural strength and resistance to corrosion. These are typically single-walled fiberglass reinforced plastic tanks or steel tanks clad with corrosive resistant coating and must meet specific UL manufacturing standards. Please call the *Office of Toxic & Hazardous Material Regulation* at (516) 227-9691 for further information regarding acceptable new tank installation.

**How can I verify if a small petroleum storage tank was previously removed or abandoned on my property?**

If a tank abandonment or removal was completed after August 1, 1986 and filed with the NCDH, you can access this information on the NCDH website and print a letter of verification by clicking [here](#).

**What if my tank was abandoned or removed previously and the homeowner or contractor never filed with the NCDH?**

If your small petroleum storage tank closure was not filed with the NCDH, you may still be eligible to file for an inspection and/or confirmation of closure. Please call the *Office of Toxic & Hazardous Material Regulation* at (516) 227-9691 for further information regarding this matter.