

Seattle Permits

—part of a multi-departmental series on City services & permitting

Decommissioning of Residential Heating Oil Tanks

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The Law

Section 3404.2.13 of the Seattle Fire Code requires that tanks and piping serving heating oil tanks which have been out of service for a period of one year or more be removed from the ground or abandoned in place.

Section 105.7.4 of the Seattle Fire Code further requires that a permit be obtained to remove, abandon, place temporarily out of service or otherwise dispose of a heating oil tank.

Permits—Process and Cost

A permit (Code: 6103) is required from the Seattle Fire Department prior to decommissioning each individual underground heating oil tank. Permits are issued to the person or contractor performing the work. Permits are not issued to the property owner, unless that person is actually performing the work.

Permit applications can be obtained by calling the Fire Department Permit Section at 206-386-1450, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Applications may also be obtained in person from the Seattle Fire Department Fire Marshal's Office at 220 3rd Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98104. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Complete permit applications will be processed, stamped *Approved to Proceed* and returned to the applicant accompanied by the following items:

- Permit Conditions

- Client Assistance Memo #5962
- Heating Oil Tank Decommissioning Report Form
- Washington Department of Ecology Report Residential Heating Oil Tanks (Publication No. R-TC-92-117).

NOTE: No permit will be issued after the tank decommissioning work has been performed. Work shall not commence until after a Fire Department permit application stamped *Approved to Proceed* has been received by the applicant.

Requirements

Decommissioning work must not start until a permit application stamped *Approved to Proceed* has been received by the applicant. The decommissioning must be performed, or directly supervised, by an individual certified by the International Code Council (ICC) as an Underground Storage Tank (UST) Decommissioner. A copy of the individual's current ICC certificate must be on file with the Seattle Fire Department. The ICC-certified Decommissioner must be present at the tank site during the entire decommissioning operation, whether tank decommissioning is done by an independent contractor or by the property owner. This requirement applies to both tank removal and abandonment in place.

Both removal and abandonment in place are methods of decommissioning available for the purposes of the Seattle Fire Code. However, removal of the tank is strongly recommended. If abandonment in place is selected as the method of decommissioning, the tank must be filled with an inert solid material (e.g. sand, concrete slurry, foam, etc.). When abandoning a tank in place, the interior of the tank must be triple

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rinsed and washed to remove as much residual product and bottom sludge as possible. Applicants should carefully review the merits of their options before choosing a method of decommissioning. Tanks suspected of leaking should be removed from the ground rather than abandoned in place. The Seattle Fire Department cannot predict, and does not attempt to predict, what future regulations may require of tanks abandoned in place under the current guidelines. A tank abandoned in place now may later require removal at additional cost and potential hazard.

The Seattle Fire Department *Heating Oil Tank Decommissioning Report Form* accompanying the approved permit must be completed by the ICC-certified Underground Storage Tank Decommissioner performing or supervising the work. This form must be returned to the Fire Department by the ICC-certified Decommissioner within 30 days of completion of the decommission.

To document decommissioning of the tank, the property owner should retain a copy of the *Tank Decommissioning Report Form* and the permit application stamped *Approved to Proceed*, as well as all receipts, certifications and written materials associated with the project.

Compliance with the Seattle Fire Code does not require that a site plan be submitted or that any soil samples be taken. However, the property owner or operator may have other obligations, including but not limited to, spill or leak reporting requirements and clean up requirements under environmental or other laws apart from the Seattle Fire Code. For example, if a tank has leaked, the Washington State Department of Ecology does have reporting requirements based on the extent of contamination found. The Northwest Regional Office of the Department of Ecology may be reached at (425) 649-7000. The Seattle Fire Department makes no representation about the application of any other laws, and it is the responsibility of the property owner or operator to determine what laws apply in an individual case.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the ICC-certified Decommissioner conducting or overseeing the decommissioning work to provide a copy of the Decommissioning Report to the property owner within 30 days of completion of the decommission work. The permit applicant shall provide a copy of the permit stamped *Approved to Proceed* to the property owner.