

Avoiding Spills from Abandoned Heating Oil Fill Pipes

Many of the home heating oil spills that occur in New York State are a result of delivering fuel oil to abandoned oil fill pipes. In many cases, a homeowner can be held responsible for the cost of cleaning up a fuel oil spill on their property.



Identifying an Abandoned Fuel Oil Fill Pipe

- An abandoned fill pipe is an oil fill pipe that is no longer in use.
- When a home's heating fuel switches from oil to natural gas, the oil tank may be removed, but the oil fill pipe is left in place.
- Fill pipes are about two to three inches in diameter and extend through a foundation wall in a location accessible to the street. For an underground oil tank, the fill pipe may be sticking out of the ground within a few inches of ground level.
- Delivering oil to an abandoned oil fill pipe can spill up to 200 gallons of oil into the basement of a home.

Addressing the Problem

- You are required by law to remove abandoned oil fill and vent pipes or fill them with concrete to prevent unwanted deliveries and spills.
- Physically remove the pipe by cutting and extracting the pieces or fill the in-place piping with concrete. Repair the hole in a foundation with materials such as cement or wood.
- It is important that you permanently remove or fill abandoned pipes. Temporary fixes like putting up a sign or blocking off the fill area still puts you at risk of oil spills.
- If you plan to change heating fuel sources or take your tank out of service, obtain a building permit from your local permit issuing official and remove the tank and lines completely or fill the piping with concrete.

For more information

www.health.ny.gov/environmental/oil_spills

btsa@health.ny.gov

(518) 402-7800

If you discover a spill, immediately report it to the NYS Spill Hotline at (800) 457-7362.



**Department
of Health**