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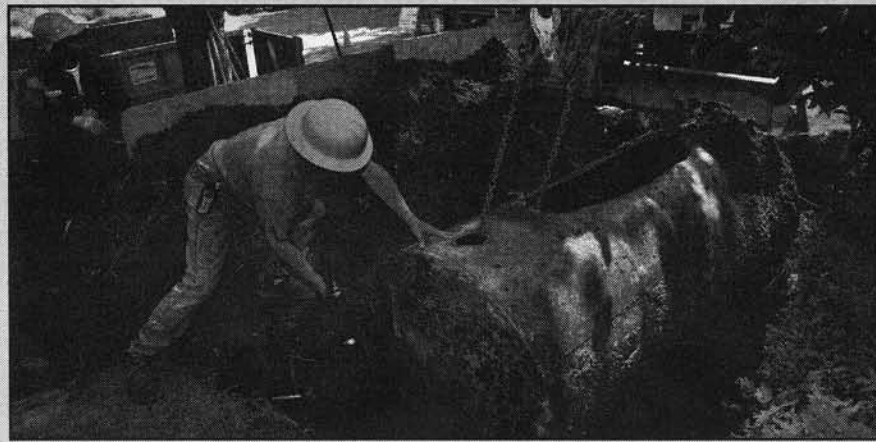
The Truth about Underground Oil Storage Tanks

Submitted by the Oregon Oil Heat Help Desk

There is a lot of misinformation out there about underground storage tanks used in many oil-heated homes. In fact, questions on the subject make up the largest percentage of calls the Oregon Oil Heat Help Desk receives each day from Realtors®. There is no doubt about the fact that older underground tanks can be a problem, but no more so than a 30-year-old roof or a dry-rotted deck. To keep your sale on track, here are the top five facts you should know about underground storage tanks.

Number 1: There are a lot of options if a tank needs to be replaced. New above ground tanks are available in a variety of shapes and sizes designed to tuck away into the corner of a garage, basement or backyard. New below ground tanks are made with very strong corrosion-resistant materials. Most importantly, a new tank can be installed quickly and is a fraction of the cost of converting to natural gas.

Number 2: Decommissioning a tank is voluntary. If a homeowner stops using an underground tank, DEQ only



Rodney Blacketer from Cascade Environmental Services helps to remove an aged heating oil tank from a residence in the Laurelhurst neighborhood. © 2001 Portland Tribune, L.E. Baskow

requires that it be emptied. Decommissioning is entirely voluntary.

Number 3: Soil samples and tank testing are only required if there is a suspected or known leak. In other words, you do not routinely need to have these services performed when selling an oil heated home. In recent years, however, many lenders have begun requesting soil samples. If your lender does, be careful. Most compa-

nies that do soil samples have a vested interest in finding a problem because they make their money on their clean up services. The Oregon Oil Heat Help Desk can provide a list of trusted testers and will even coordinate with your homeowner for you.

Number 4: In Oregon, the average clean-up cost from a leaking tank is under \$4,000. Perhaps one of the most widespread misconceptions about un-

derground tanks is that they are a financially devastating accident waiting to happen. It is simply untrue. Statistics prove that the cost of clean up in our state is relatively low, under \$4,000. Home heating oil is also non-toxic, non-explosive, biodegradable and contains no carcinogens.

Number 5: Tank service contracts are transferable in a real estate sale. Most home heating oil dealers offer tank service contracts, which cover costs up to \$5,000 in the event of an underground storage tank failure. Since that is about the cost of the average clean up from a leak, transferable service contracts provide a very attractive benefit for the homebuyer.

If you would like more information about underground storage tanks, the Oregon Oil Heat Help Desk number is 503-546-5501. Calls are accepted from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Or, e-mail the Oregon Oil Heat Help Desk at helpdesk@oregonoilheat.com. Representatives are also available for sales meeting presentations on the ABC's of selling oil-heated homes.