

# What I Need to Know About Domestic Fuel Spills

## Homeowner's Guide Oil Tank Safety

TO REPORT AN ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY  
OIL OR CHEMICAL SPILLS, FISH KILLS CALL

# 772-2083

24 HOURS COLLECT OR  
1-800-563-2444



Approximately 20% of all spills of environmental concern, which occur in this province every year, are from domestic furnace oil tanks.

If not properly installed and maintained, the common domestic heating oil tank found at many Newfoundland and Labrador homes can become a serious threat to the environment.

This information suggests how to avoid or minimize the risks associated with leaks and spills from home heating oil tanks, and gives the procedures to follow should a fuel loss occur.

### What are my Responsibilities?

As owner of a furnace oil tank you have a number of responsibilities of which you may not be aware:

- to ensure the fuel tank is sound and not leaking;
- if a leak does occur, to ensure the proper authorities are notified. Regulations require that a spill greater than 70 litres (15 gallons) be reported immediately;
- to clean up spilled oil from all areas affected by the spill. In addition to your own property, this may include neighboring properties, drainage systems, streams, ponds, etc.;
- to cover any costs associated with the clean up of, or the impacts of fuel lost from your tank.

### How Can I Minimize My Risk of a Spill?

- contact your fuel supplier and/or tank supplier to determine precautionary procedures;
- have your tank and piping routinely inspected for signs of leakage or deterioration;
- ensure that you have adequate insurance protection against the costs associated with a spill.

### How Do I Report a Spill?

The Government Service Centre in cooperation with the Canadian Coast Guard service, provides a 24-hour emergency response program for environmental emergencies. **You can report a spill by calling 772-2083. Collect calls will be accepted or call 1-800-563-2444.**

You should notify owners of neighboring properties, that you have had a spill and that you are taking measures to have the situation addressed.

### What Information Should I Give?

As much detail as possible should be given. It is important for response personnel to know your name and telephone number, the location of the spill, and the approximate amount of the loss.

### What Does a Spill Clean-up Involve?

Immediate excavation of contaminated soil and materials is recommended. This will help reduce the spread of oil onto neighboring properties. Once the excavation is complete, fresh soil may be used to replace the contaminated soil.

Before backfilling with fresh soil, the site must be inspected by an official of the Government Service Centre to ensure the contaminated area has been cleaned satisfactorily.

### **How Do I Dispose of the Contaminated Soil?**

Disposal of oil-contaminated soil must be done at an approved disposal site. A Government Service Centre official can inform you of the proper disposal procedures.

### **Who Provides Clean-up Services?**

Anyone can undertake to clean up a spill, as long as it is done to the satisfaction of the Department of Environment, as determined by officials of the Government Service Centre.

There are a number of private contractors who specialize in the clean up of environmental spills. A list of these can be found in the yellow pages of your telephone directory under Environmental Consultants & Services.

### **What Will Be the Cost of Clean-up?**

Costs vary, depending on the particulars of the situation. Some factors which will affect the cost of cleaning your property of an oil spill are:

- the amount of oil spilled
- where the oil has spread
- the type of soil on your property
- the impact of the spill on neighbouring properties
- the impact of the spill on the local water table
- the accessibility of the spill site

Additional factors such as weather conditions and time of year may also affect the cost of clean up operations.

One of the major factors affecting cost is response time. Early response in clean up operations will reduce the risk of serious environmental damage and also reduce the costs related to clean up and any associated effects. **In any event clean up can cost \$5,000 for a common spill and in excess of \$150,000 for a large spill.**

**It is important to review your homeowners insurance policy, or contact your insurance company, to ensure your policy covers domestic fuel spills.**

### **Where Can I Get Additional Information?**

For more information about Domestic Fuel Spills, contact the Government Service Centre office nearest you:

## **REGIONAL OFFICES**

<b>St. John's</b> 5 Mews Place Tel: (709) 729-3699	<b>Clarenville</b> 2 Masonic Terrace Tel: (709) 466-4060	<b>Gander</b> McCurdy Complex Tel: (709) 256-1420
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<b>Corner Brook</b> The Noton Building Tel: (709) 637-2204	<b>Happy Valley-Goose Bay</b> Thomas Building 13 Churchill Street Tel: (709) 896-2661
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## **AREA OFFICES**

<b>Harbour Grace</b> Rockwood Realty Building Main Highway Tel: (709) 945-3107	<b>Grand Falls-Windsor</b> 9 Queensway Tel: (709) 292-4206
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### **SUB OFFICES are located in the following areas:**

<b>Grand Bank</b> Tel: (709) 832-1672	<b>Lewisporte</b> Tel: (709) 535-0262
<b>Stephenville</b> Tel: (709) 643-8650	<b>St. Anthony</b> Tel: (709) 454-8833