

## Update on L.U.S.T. from the Conservation Commission

L.U.S.T. stands for *leaking underground storage tanks* (at the CT DEEP). As the acronym suggests it is nothing but trouble. If you have a buried underground oil storage tank, or a buried supply line for your home heating system, you are sitting on an environmental time bomb. The trouble starts when a leak develops in the tank or piping due to corrosion or settling, and then oil leaks into your soil. If the tank leaks slowly through pinholes you might not notice an increase in your oil consumption, which has allowed a slow but continuous release of heating oil into the soil over years. In general, homeowners have liability for investigating and cleaning up any pollution resulting from these leaks. The DEEP particularly recommends that remedial actions be taken immediately if drinking water wells are affected, or if oil is seen on the surface of a water body.

Whenever you sell your home, someone (bank, buyer, home inspector) will likely identify that you have a buried oil storage tank on your property, and insist that it be removed as a condition of the sale. If it is determined that a release of oil has occurred the contractor must notify the Emergency Response & Spill Prevention Division of DEEP at (860) 424-3338. Soil samples will then be collected and analyzed for petroleum hydrocarbons by a certified laboratory. If Total Petroleum Hydrocarbon (TPH) concentrations exceed the limits (500 parts per million), additional soil will be removed and testing conducted to document remaining TPH concentrations. Contaminated soil must then be hauled away to a treatment facility. The total cost of remediation will depend on the extent of contamination. It is important to remember that all buried oil tanks left in the ground will eventually develop a leak if they are not removed. The time to failure can vary widely depending on the tank construction and the soil conditions. ***The best thing to do is have your tank removed now.***

Randolph Bernard, Conservation Commission

For more information read:

“Guidance for Residential Underground Home Heating Oil Tank Releases” and “Residential Underground Home Heating Oil Tanks Frequently Asked Questions” on the **Conservation Commission webpage at [www.washingtonct.org](http://www.washingtonct.org)**

or

Contact the DEP at:

The Leaking Underground Storage Tank Program at (860) 424-3376,

The Remediation Section at (860) 424-3705, or

The Emergency Response & Spill Prevention Division at 860-424-3338 or toll-free at 866-337-7745.