

# Checking Your Heating Oil Tank for Water

## Why It's Important

If there is water in your tank, this may indicate that the tank is leaking. A leaking tank pollutes soil as well as nearby surface and groundwater. Heating oil pollution poses hazardous impacts to human health and the environment if left unresolved.

A few other problems that could occur from water in your tank include:

- Rust - this can increase the likelihood of future leaks.
- Microbial contamination - water in the tank can breed bacteria, which can cause corrosion in the tank.
- Frozen fuel lines - this can stop the flow of oil leading to heat loss, and can cause pipes to burst.

## Causes

Two common ways that water can enter a tank include:

- Rainwater seeping into the tank, especially outdoor tanks.
- Condensation can occur when the temperature inside the tank is cooler than the temperature outside the tank. This process causes water vapor in the tank to turn to liquid.

## Prevention

Some ways to prevent water getting in your tank include:

- Making sure lids are securely closed.
- Yearly tank inspections by a technician.
- Adjusting your tank's temperature to reduce condensation.
- Maintaining a full tank.
- Replacing old tanks.

## Removal of Water from Tank

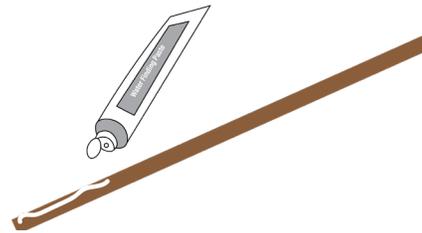
To remove water from a tank, it is best to hire a qualified technician who can drain or pump it from the tank.

If your tank is over 15 years old, you may also want to consider replacing it.

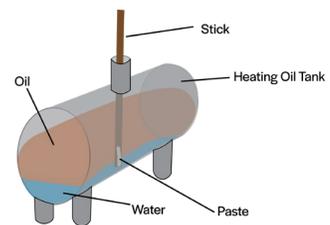
## How to Check Your Tank for Water

It is recommended that you check your heating oil tank for water at least once a year. With a long stick and water indicating paste that changes color upon contact with water, you can perform this inspection yourself by following these steps:

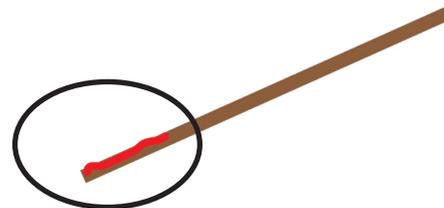
**Step 1: Apply water indicating paste to one end of a long stick.**



**Step 2: Insert the paste-end of your stick into your heating oil tank so that it reaches the bottom.**



**Step 3: Check the paste color on the stick. If the paste changes color, then there is water in your heating oil tank.**



## The Pollution Liability Insurance Agency's Heating Oil Programs

Our Heating Oil Programs:

- [Heating Oil Pollution Liability Insurance](#)
- [Heating Oil Technical Assistance](#)
- [Heating Oil Loan and Grant](#)

For information about our Heating Oil Technical Assistance Program, you can contact:

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