

Attached a general Q&A regarding the proposed changes to the existing bylaw which answers some of your past questions; however we have tried to answer them directly, below.

1. Concern was raised as to how the BOH would get the word out about the new requirements of the revised regulation:
  - The Board of Health intends to conduct an extensive educational campaign to promote the revised regulations through the Town's website, local newspaper article(s), and via cable television (Westford CAT).
2. The Boards questioned how many private residences might have an underground fuel oil storage tank:
  - Staff researched local oil companies who service roughly 3000 Westford customers and have determined that, at least among the companies surveyed, the estimated number of these types of buried tanks appears to be very small.
    - One company services 7000 customers in 30 communities and is aware of only 1 current tank in existence. It is on State property and not located in Westford. The last tank they recall being present in Westford was removed in excess of 15 years ago with the required proper permits through the Fire Department.
    - Another company stated that 95% of the tanks it services are located in the basement and not buried. The 5% not in the basement includes above ground tanks in yards, tanks in out buildings such as a garage/shed, and some buried tanks. The portion of the 5% that may be buried is likely very small.
3. Average costs for tank tightness testing:
  - Our research shows that the cost of testing varies with the size of the tank and the actual location of fuel lines. Testing costs range in the area of \$400-\$500 to around \$1,500 for larger, more complicated containment tanks and systems.
4. The proposed interval of testing of underground storage tanks are as follows:
  - The bylaw requires commercial underground steel tanks to be tested beginning 15 years after installation under the ground. The tank owner can obtain a variance if s/he can show that the tank is made of fiberglass, is a double-walled tank, or has self-contained monitoring. In these cases, the tank does not have to be first tested until 20 years after installation under the ground. Residential tanks must first be tested 20 years after installation under the ground. Commercial tanks must be tested annually after the first inspection; residential tanks must be tested every three years after the first inspection.

5. Clarify the average basic cost associated with tank removals:
  - An uncomplicated tank removal – when a tank is not partially under a building – can cost up to \$1,000. The cost can be between \$1,000-\$2,500 when the removal is more complicated. These costs do not include the cost of buying a new tank and having it installed in the basement.
  
6. How do people know if they have an underground, buried fuel oil storage tank?
  - Any house built prior to 1975 is suspected of having or having had an underground oil tank. If the owner periodically receives an oil bill, he/she has an oil tank on the property somewhere. If it isn't in the basement or a nearby out building, it is likely buried in close proximity to the foundation. Often fill and vent pipes connecting to the tank can be seen.. In addition, oil providers typically perform a “new client” inspection to any residence they have not delivered oil to previously. The owner may also simply ask the oil provider to determine the location of the oil tank.
  
7. What are the costs to the Town associated with this revised bylaw?
  - The revised bylaw with its inspectional requirements has no added cost to the Town over the existing version. The commercial and retail permits both require a fee be paid which will cover the associated costs making it a cost neutral program.