

FUEL OIL TANK PREPARATION - BEFORE THE FLOOD

Fuel oil spilled in your home may be your worst nightmare!!!

Because fuel is lighter than water, flood waters that enter an enclosed basement and are deep enough to come into contact with fuel tanks, may cause your tank to become unstable, tip over and/or float on the surface of the water if the tank is not secured.

IF FLOOD WATERS WILL BE HIGH ENOUGH IN YOUR HOME OR OFFICE TO CAUSE YOUR TANK TO SHIFT OR FLOAT:

- Contact an area bulk fuel distributor to remove the fuel from your tank. Although this will make your tank more buoyant in the flood waters, it will also prevent leakage of fuel into your home or office in the event water tips over and/or enters your tank through an opening, **OR**,
- Once your furnace/fuel tank is no longer in service, seal the tank's vent, fuel and fill tubes, and any other openings in the tank to prevent water from entering or fuel from leaving the tank. Remember that the seals must be water tight, **AND**,
- Secure the tank in such a way as to keep it in an upright position in the event that water causes it to float.

REMEMBER THAT THE TANK MAY FLOAT LIKE A BOBBER IF YOUR BASEMENT IS FULLY FLOODED, ANYTHING USED TO SECURE THE TANK MUST BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND THESE BUOYANCY FORCES.

Flood Cleanup Recommendations

Oil Cleanup

If you discover oil floating in your basement, please notify your local city officials for information on how to obtain absorbent pads to soak up the oil. These pads only soak up oil, and are designed to repel water. When conditions allow for you to pump flood water out of your basement, pump down to a level that allows you to lay absorbent pads on the surface to soak up the oil, but does not allow the oil to come into contact with the basement flood. As the pads turn pink, flip them over. A broom handle, rake or pitch fork will work well for flipping pads. Please wear rubber gloves during cleanup. Change the pads as they get saturated. All soaked pads should be placed in garbage bags, tied or sealed closed, and brought to a city-designated area for future disposal.

Contaminated (oil or sewage soaked) Debris

Any personal belongings, carpeting and/or construction materials that have been soaked with oil, and are not salvageable, will have to be hauled to a transfer facility, incinerator or a sanitary landfill. Check with your local facility before hauling your debris. These materials CANNOT be hauled to a demolition landfill. If you have questions, contact your local solid waste coordinator.

Fuel Oil Tanks

Check with your supplier to determine if you have water present in your fuel oil tank, and for pumping fuel oil/water mixtures out of your tank.

Household Chemicals

Keep all damaged household chemicals separate for later disposal. Place them in plastic bags, and be sure to keep the product label with each bag. Call your County Solid Waste Officer for collection dates. Remember to store chemicals out of reach of children and pets.

Basement Cleaning

Ventilate your basement before and during cleaning with chemical solutions, and if oil is present. When basements flood, there is usually some sewer backup as well. Therefore, after the water and/or sewage has been removed, it is important to disinfect the surfaces to eliminate odors and bacteria. If your basement had oil spilled in it, use a detergent to clean oil off the surfaces. Sheetrock and paneling should be removed and properly disposed at a transfer facility, incinerator or sanitary landfill. Concrete walls, wood supports, ceiling structures, and beams will soak up oil like a sponge. Therefore, those surfaces will need to be sealed with an epoxy pain sealer once they have dried out.

Source: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency