

Tank Installation/Decommission

A permit is required to install, construct or alter tanks, piping or associated equipment. The International Fire Code also requires that flammable and combustible liquid storage tanks and piping which have been out of service for a period of one year or more be removed from the ground or abandoned in place in an approved manner.

A completed application form must be submitted together with a site plan and any additional project details necessary to provide an accurate depiction of the proposed work. The application form can be found in the "Forms and Documents" section of this page.

For decommissioning of residential heating oil tanks the application, site plan and scope of work may be faxed to the Northshore Fire Department at (425)483-6598.

Decommissioning work must not start until the permit has been picked up by the applicant.

Both removal and abandonment in place are approved methods of decommissioning for residential tanks. However, removal of the tank is strongly recommended. If abandonment in place is selected as the method of decommissioning, the tank may either be filled with an inert solid material (e.g. sand, concrete slurry, foam, etc.) or left empty. In both cases when abandoning a tank in place, the interior of the tank must be triple rinsed and washed to remove as much residual product and bottom sludge as possible. Then the tank must be permanently capped below grade to prevent accidental refilling. Applicants should carefully review the merits of their options before choosing a method of decommissioning. Tanks suspected of leaking should be removed from the ground rather than abandoned in place. The Northshore Fire Department can not predict and does not attempt to predict, what future regulations may require of tanks abandoned in place under the current guidelines. A tank abandoned in place now may later require removal at additional cost and potential hazard.

The Northshore Fire Department Underground Residential Decommission Checklist form accompanying the approved permit must be completed and returned to the Northshore Fire Department to provide documentation of the completion of the job.

To document decommissioning of the tank, the property owner should retain a copy of the tank Decommissioning Checklist and a copy of the permit, as well as all receipts, certifications and written materials associated with the project.

Compliance with the International Fire Code does not require that any soil samples be taken. However, the property owner or operator may have other obligations, including but not limited to, spill or leak reporting requirements and clean up requirements under environmental or other laws apart from the Fire Code. For example, if a tank has leaked, the Washington State Department of Ecology does have reporting requirements based on the extent of contamination found. The Northwest Regional Office of the Department of Ecology may be reached at (425) 649-7000. The Northshore Fire Department makes no representation about the application of any other laws, and it is the responsibility of the property owner or operator to determine what laws apply in an individual case.