

Storage Tanks

Many residents in the Peapack Brook subwatershed use underground or aboveground storage tanks for home heating oil. These tanks are a potential source of ground and surface water pollution, while home heating oil is also known to contain several carcinogens.

- Leaking Tanks

Leaks from tanks can result from defects in tank material, improper fittings, improper installation, damage during installation, corrosion or mechanical failure of the pipes and fittings, and tanks that are improperly abandoned or removed.

Leaking tanks pose a serious threat to ground water supplies. Problems from leaking tanks can include surface water contamination, surface and subsurface soil contamination, and property damage, including seepage into buildings and damage to underground utilities.

Tank owners are required to report and clean up a discharge regardless of the quantity released. It should be reported to the local fire department, health department, and the NJDEP Hotline at (877) WARN DEP.

- Proper Construction and Installation

Proper construction reduces owner liability and threats to ground and surface waters. All tanks, regulated or unregulated, must comply with local building, fire, and zoning ordinances. Materials used for tanks should be corrosion-proof, such as fiberglass, reinforced plastic, or steel wrapped with polyethylene. Steel tanks can also be purchased with corrosion protection for the tank and piping. Double-walled tanks and piping can provide added protection.

- Leak Detection

Some signs of a leaking tank are obvious and include the following: unusual amounts of water in the tank, unusual odors, petroleum products in basements, malfunctioning heating systems, dead or dying vegetation near the tank and an unusual increase in fuel usage. It is recommended that homeowners have a tank tightness test performed upon tank installation and periodically afterwards. Early leak detection is a tank owner's best protection against a costly cleanup.