

Underground Heating Oil Tank Cleanup Reimbursement Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a list of frequently asked questions regarding the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Underground Heating Oil Tank Cleanup Reimbursement Program.

1. Is the reimbursement payment taxable income?

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) considers these reimbursements as income for federal income tax purposes. Applicants who receive a reimbursement payment will be issued an IRS Form 1099 for the tax year in which the reimbursement was issued. For tax assistance, please contact a tax professional.

2. Do I have to report my leaking heating oil tank to DEP?

If a heating oil release has contaminated or could potentially contaminate groundwater or surface water, it must be reported to the local DEP regional office. Since the potential to contaminate groundwater or surface water is often difficult to assess, DEP recommends that all heating oil releases to the environment be reported.

3. How do I report a heating oil release?

Releases should be reported to the DEP regional office serving the county in which the tank is located. The DEP regional office can help with information on cleaning up the release and obtaining cleanup liability protection. A list of DEP regional offices and the counties they serve is available in the [DEP Regional Storage Tank Offices](#) (PDF) map and on the DEP website at www.dep.pa.gov, search term: [Regional Resources](#).

If needed, DEP emergency response contact numbers are available on the DEP website at www.dep.pa.gov, search term: [Report an Incident](#).

4. Do I have to clean up environmental contamination resulting from my heating oil release?

Yes.

5. Do I have to use a DEP-certified contractor?

The use of a DEP-certified storage tank company for underground heating oil tank closure or removal is not required if the tank stored heating oil for on-site use only. If you choose to use a certified contractor, the following link will direct you to DEP's [Certified Storage Tank Companies Search](#). The UMR certification category is for underground storage tank closure and removal.

DEP does not certify contractors for site characterization and cleanup work.

6. I have a partially buried leaking tank. Is this tank eligible for the program?

If 10% or more of the volume of the tank (including the volume of the underground pipes connected to it) is buried beneath the surface of the ground, the tank is eligible, provided it meets the other requirements of the program.

7. I have a leaking tank that stands on the floor in my basement. Is this tank eligible for the program?

No. The tank must be buried in the ground to be eligible for this program.

8. Are charges for preparation of tank closure or environmental cleanup reports eligible for reimbursement?

Tank closure and environmental cleanup reports associated with the leaking underground heating oil tank are eligible for reimbursement if the report is submitted to DEP.

9. Are contractor administrative fees, including fees charged for preparation of the reimbursement application, eligible for reimbursement?

No.

10. Are permit fees eligible for reimbursement?

Permit fees for removal or closure of a leaking tank and for environmental cleanup are eligible for reimbursement.

Permit fees for installation of a new tank or heating system, or for other work not related to leaking tank removal or closure or environmental cleanup, are not eligible for reimbursement.

11. Are charges for re-landscaping and re-paving eligible for reimbursement?

Charges for restoration of contaminated areas by backfilling, grading and basic re-vegetation, such as seeding to stabilize soil, are eligible.

DEP cannot reimburse for costs to re-landscape or re-pave areas disturbed by tank removal or environmental cleanup.

12. Is the use of bioremediation materials an eligible expense under the Underground Heating Oil Tank Cleanup Reimbursement Program?

Costs associated with the use of bioremediation amendments to address petroleum contaminated media may be eligible for reimbursement, depending on site-specific circumstances. To evaluate whether the environmental conditions are suitable for *in-situ* (in place) bioremediation and to measure effectiveness, pre- and post-application soil samples will be necessary. Property owners considering a bioremediation program must contact their respective DEP regional office for guidance on applicability and information required to determine eligibility. A list of DEP regional offices and the counties they serve is available in the [DEP Regional Storage Tank Offices](#) (PDF) map and on the DEP website at www.dep.pa.gov, search term: [Regional Resources](#).

For additional information and answers to eligibility questions, call the DEP Bureau of Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields at 717-787-0886 or email tankcleanup@pa.gov.