

## How Safe Is Your Oil Tank?

Many North Quadra homes are still heated by fuel oil. However, some tank systems are aging and becoming a growing environmental hazard. Several fuel oil spills have recently occurred in Saanich from such tanks. While many spills have been small, their persistence is quite troubling. Even a small home oil spill can be significant.

One cup of oil can pollute an Olympic sized swimming pool! Unfortunately, the design of storm water systems makes it likely such spills could damage our local water courses such as Gabo Creek, Rithets Bog which feeds Swan Lake and the Colquitz system. When spills occur, they tend to flow into storm sewers, often via perimeter drains around the house. Rain runoff then washes the oil through the sewer system into our streams and lakes. See below Saanich resident, Russ Godfrey's chilling account, one that may prompt readers to consider an oil tank "check-up":

*After seeing the Adelaide street oil tank fiasco in Saanich, I had my 15 year old tank checked by my oil company. I thought it might show a little wear and tear. Little did I know! After the tank was removed the contractor showed me something very alarming. Near the tank leg, covered by what I thought was a small surface rust patch, was a pinhole breach. He put the tip of his pen into the hole and pushed. With very little effort the pen easily slid into the tank.*

*This shocked me as I had NO idea my tank was in such bad shape. Also, it had just been filled a few days previously. I was THAT close to an Adelaide St. Mess! Tanks rust from the inside out. The tank appeared to be solid, but it wasn't. I now have a new tank, double hulled, that came with a \$1 million insurance policy-included in the price. It's also earthquake proof, strapped to the pad, unlike the previous tank. I strongly encourage folks to take a very close look at your oil tank. If in doubt, get an expert. I cannot overstate just how close I came to a serious environmental and economic disaster. —Russ Godfrey*

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