



Dear Valued Customer,

Under the CSA B139 tenth edition that an annual visual inspection of the fuel oil tank, piping, and fuel oil filters for leakage should be checked annually by a certified burner Mechanic. Regular inspections are necessary to avoid leaks, corrosion, and other potential issues that could lead to costly repairs or even environmental damage.

Understanding the inspection process and staying proactive with maintenance measures can save you from unexpected breakdowns and costly environmental clean-ups.

Implementing these practices not only protects your investment but also contributes to safer, more efficient heating operations within your property. Experts recommend scheduling professional inspections at least once a year to ensure optimal performance and safety.

Let's investigate the importance of oil tank inspections, explore the process, and provide actionable insights into maintaining these vital components of your property.

Why are oil tank inspections important?

Oil tanks, whether aboveground or underground, can pose significant safety risks if not properly maintained. Leaks or structural failures can lead to fire hazards, potentially putting lives at risk. Regular inspections help identify vulnerabilities before they turn into crises.

A leaking oil tank can cause severe environmental damage. Oil spills can contaminate soil and groundwater, leading to costly cleanup operations and long-term ecological damage. Regular inspections can prevent leaks, protecting both the environment and your property.

While it might seem counterintuitive, spending money on regular inspections can save substantial costs in the long run. Identifying and fixing potential issues early can prevent expensive repairs or replacements down the line. Moreover, a well-maintained oil tank operates more efficiently, reducing fuel consumption and lowering heating costs.

What happens in a heating oil tank inspection?

During an oil tank inspection, professionals will check several aspects to ensure the tank's integrity and functionality.

Structural integrity: Inspectors will look for signs of rust, corrosion, or physical damage that could compromise the tank.

Leaks and spills: They will check for any evidence of leaks or spills around the tank area.



Connections and valves: Inspectors will examine the fittings, pipes, and valves connected to the tank to ensure they are secure and free from leaks.

Tank placement: The inspection will also consider whether the tank is installed correctly and in a suitable location to avoid unnecessary risks.

An oil tank should be inspected at least once a year, particularly before the heating season begins. However, older tanks or those in harsher environments may require more frequent checks.

Aboveground tanks are easier to inspect due to their accessibility. Inspectors can quickly assess the external condition and look for visible signs of wear and tear.

Fiberglass vs. steel heating oil tanks

Fiberglass tanks are less prone to corrosion compared to steel tanks, but they still need regular inspections for structural integrity. Steel tanks, while sturdy, are more susceptible to rust and corrosion, necessitating more frequent scrutiny.

Common signs of heating oil tank issues

Visible rust or corrosion: Rust and corrosion are clear indicators that the tank is degrading and needs attention.

Oil smells: A strong smell of oil around the tank area could indicate a leak.

Unexplained increases in heating oil usage: If your heating system is using more fuel than usual, it may suggest a leak or inefficiency within the tank.

Stains around the tank: Oil stains on the floor or ground, or near the tank's connections, can indicate leaks.

Weeping: If condensation builds up on the outside of the tank even long after it was filled, can indicate problems with the tank.

Regular oil tank inspections are a wise investment in safety, environmental protection, and cost savings. Don't wait for a problem to arise before acting.

Stephen Crickard

Safety Manager

Western Petroleum