



**MassDEP**

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

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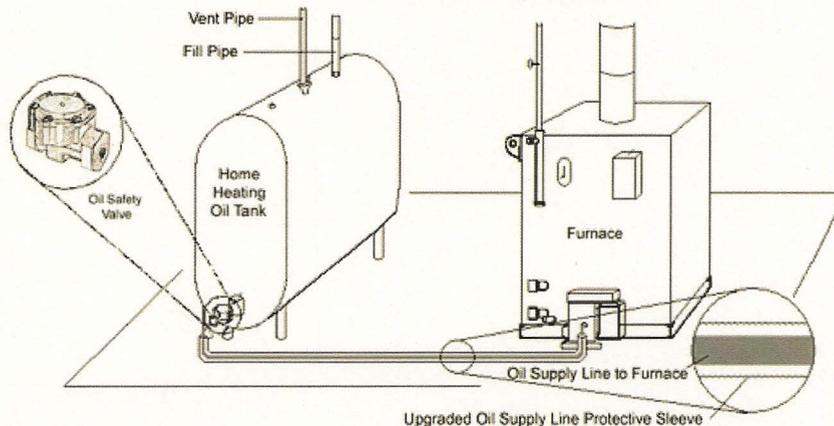
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**Residents Who Heat With Oil Reminded That Homeowner Heating Safety Law Requirements Take Effect September 30, 2011**

*Oil Burner Must Have Safety Valve or Protective Sleeve to Prevent Spills*

BOSTON - The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) reminds homeowners who heat with oil of a new requirement under the Massachusetts Homeowner Heating Safety Law. The law mandates that all oil-burning heating systems either have an oil-safety valve or a protective sleeve on the oil supply line if the oil supply line is in contact with concrete, the earth, or other floor surfaces (see diagram below). The measure also gives homeowners the ability to voluntarily purchase oil leak insurance coverage.

**Above-Ground Home Heating Oil System  
Leak Prevention Upgrades**



The deadline for homeowners to bring their heating oil systems into compliance with the leak prevention requirements is September 30, 2011.

"Taking a simple, preventive measure now will reduce the number of leaks and spills of home heating oil from residential heating systems, and result in fewer costly cleanups across the state," said MassDEP Commissioner Kenneth Kimmell. "It will also result in fewer releases that have the potential to impact homes and contaminate our soil and groundwater resources."

The law applies to owners of 1-to 4-unit residences heated with oil. These residences must already have or must install an oil safety valve or oil supply line with a protective sleeve for any oil supply line that is in contact with floor surfaces.

The cost of the leak prevention upgrades generally range from \$150 to \$350 per system, and must be installed by a licensed oil burner technician. Licensed technicians are employed by home heating oil delivery companies, or companies that service oil heating systems or are self-employed.

Homes constructed since 1990 with oil burners are likely to already have one of the oil safety devices consistent with the fire safety code on new construction. Also, many older homes where the heating system has been substantially repaired or upgraded, or where a new oil tank has been installed, may also already be in compliance.

In addition to preventing costly, environmentally-damaging oil spills, a key benefit of the Massachusetts Homeowner Heating Safety Law - passed by the legislature in 2008 and amended in 2010 - requires insurance companies that write homeowner insurance policies to make available to all homeowners in compliance with the safety provision, coverage for leaks from home oil heating systems. There is no requirement for homeowners to buy the insurance, however homes with the proper leak-protection must be given the option to buy this insurance coverage.

Preventable residential oil leaks occur each year in Massachusetts. In recent years the number of these leaks has been steadily declining, which may indicate the success of the oil safety valve or oil line protective sleeve installations in preventing such leaks. For example,

during a 12-month period of 2010-2011, there were 145 such leaks compared to 183 during the same period in 2009-2010. Home heating spills can disrupt the lives of residents and in some cases neighboring property owners. In addition, the costs of cleaning up these spills can range from \$15,000 to as high as \$250,000 or more

For more information on the Homeowner Heating Safety Law, turn to:

<http://www.mass.gov/dep/cleanup/laws/hhsl.htm> /dep/cleanup/laws/hhsl.htm MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

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