



State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality  
**Heating Oil Tank Contractor Bulletin**

January 2019

Hello, heating oil tank service providers! We are restarting periodic bulletins with program news that we hope you will find helpful. This bulletin summarizes a review of DEQ program activities and public feedback performed in response to increased workload and funding questions.

DEQ is proposing a fee increase for the Heating Oil Tank Program. DEQ fees were last changed in 2007 and activity has increased since then. The fee increase would allow DEQ to provide better guidance and support for homeowners, service providers and realtors. Our goal is to make the project completion and certification process as effective, economical and efficient as possible.

The following table presents the program’s current and proposed fee structure:

Fees	Current	Proposed	
<b>Report Filing Fees</b>			
Clean Decommissioning	\$75/project	\$100/project	
Cleanup Report	\$200/project	Tiered amount based on project type: 1) Soil matrix: \$250 2) Generic remedy: \$350 3) Risk-based: \$450	
<b>Licensure Fees</b>			
Service Provider License	\$750/year	2020	\$800/year
		2021	\$900/year
		2022	\$1000/year
Service Provider Supervisor License	\$75/year	\$100/year	

To become law this proposal must be reviewed and passed by the Oregon Legislature. Governor Kate Brown submitted the DEQ proposal as Senate Bill 40 for consideration in the 2019 session, which began in January. A copy is available at [SB 40](#). Amendments to add the fee amount listed here are being prepared. If approved, the fee increase would be effective Jan. 1, 2020. Licensure fee increases would begin on Jan. 1 of each year and remain constant after 2022.

SB 40 was assigned to the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and a public hearing is anticipated in February. Anyone interested can track progress via the [Oregon Legislature website](#). For more information on the legislative process, including how to sign up for e-news and bill alerts or how to submit testimony on bills, please see the [Citizen Engagement Section](#).

We’d like to hear from you regarding the proposed fee increase. Please contact Mike Korten Hof at 503-229-5474 or [korten.hof.mike@deq.state.or.us](mailto:korten.hof.mike@deq.state.or.us) with your comments or questions.

## **Stakeholder Outreach and Feedback**

DEQ has been conducting outreach to homeowners, service providers and realtors to receive feedback about the fee proposal and recent experiences with DEQ's Heating Oil Tank Program. Here's what we heard:

### **Homeowners**

DEQ contacted homeowners who had a heating oil tank cleaned up or decommissioned within the last 12 months. We provided a seven-question survey to evaluate homeowners' experiences with service providers and DEQ's program. As of Jan. 2019, DEQ staff have called over 100 homeowners. We also began including survey flyers with DEQ closure letters starting in September 2018. Key takeaways included from the survey so far include:

- Most respondents (81 percent) do not have any contact with DEQ during the cleanup and/or decommission process. When they do, they are satisfied with the program's response.
- All respondents were very satisfied with the quality of work performed by their service provider.
- The most common issues they encountered in the process included cost, not understanding the timeline of work and DEQ approval, and not understanding how to cleanup or decommission a heating oil tank.
- About one-quarter of respondents thought that DEQ field oversight during the cleanup and/or decommission process would have been helpful.

### **Service Providers**

In October, DEQ conducted a focus group with a small group of service providers to share the results of the homeowner survey and to get feedback on the proposed fee increase and the functionality of the Heating Oil Tank Program. The presentation from this meeting and a summary of the focus group discussion is available online at: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/tanks/Pages/HOT-Service-Providers.aspx>

The main takeaway from the discussion was a recommendation for a tiered fee increase for each type of cleanup report—soil matrix, generic remedy, and risk based. The tiered approach has since been incorporated into the fee increase proposal (see fee table above). DEQ staff concurred with this approach, as it reflects the increased level of complexity and staff time needed to review these types of cleanups.

Another theme was the desire from service providers to receive more technical assistance from DEQ, which would include regular service provider bulletins and increased availability from project managers to discuss site issues. For complex sites that require significant coordination with program project managers, increased use of "cost-recovery" to pay directly for time is also anticipated.

The group also discussed DEQ inspecting and auditing a small percentage of each service provider's onsite work. Service providers asked why this was necessary due to the certification system. DEQ staff consider field inspections essential to provide consumers environmental protection by verifying that tank decommissions, and cleanups are being conducted in accordance with DEQ rules.

### **Realtors**

In November 2018, DEQ presented a webinar to the Oregon Association of Realtors. The 45-minute presentation covered basic information about the Heating Oil Tank Program, discussed the outreach performed with homeowners and service providers, and the proposed fee increase. Following the webinar, a survey was distributed to realtors. Comments included the need to increase awareness and information for realtors and homeowners about decommissioning and cleaning up heating oil tanks.

**Questions or concerns?**

DEQ intends to send regular bulletins to technical service providers and host an annual service provider meetings to share future program developments and gather feedback.

The fastest way to contact DEQ is by calling 503-229-6170 or by emailing [hotinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:hotinfo@deq.state.or.us). Our on-call staff respond to inquiries throughout each business day and route technical questions as needed. We look forward to working with you in the new year!