Learn about Health Department cleanup and permitting requirements at Underground Storage Tank (UST) sites.

What are the concerns with Underground Storage Tank (UST) sites?
Contaminated UST sites:

- Degrade the environment.
- Pollute drinking water.
- Expose communities to toxic chemicals.
- Harm economic development, often in areas with the greatest health disparities.

What is the Health Department’s role and how is it different from Washington Department of Ecology?
The Health Department requires owners of all current and historic UST sites to cleanup contamination and remove abandoned or leaking tanks. Our Local Health Code applies to all sites in Pierce County.

Ecology and Pollution Liability Insurance Agency (PLIA) provide voluntary ways to resolve a site's status with the State, but those account for a smaller portion of all contaminated sites.

Health Department requirements for cleanup, permitting and reporting apply to all sites.

When are Site Cleanup/UST Removal Permits required?
UST removals require an annual Site Cleanup permit. Contaminated UST sites must maintain an annual Site Cleanup permit until cleanup is complete.

How do I get a Site Cleanup/UST Removal permit?
Complete an application and pay the annual permit fee. See the application and fee schedule at www.tpchd.org/ust. We send reminders when it’s time to renew your active permit.

What do the permit fees cover?
Permit fees cover:

- Cleanup enforcement.
- Technical guidance for property owners.
- Connect property owners with consulting and financial assistance.
- Resource coordination with Ecology and PLIA.
- Coordination with attorneys for insurance claims.
- Investigation and response to environmental and public health emergencies.
- Work plan reviews and cleanup reporting.
- Administer appeals and other due process.
- Public record requests.
What happens if a site or owner is not in compliance with UST requirements?
The Health Department will work with owners to come into compliance with UST requirements. If an owner refuses to comply or misses permitting deadlines, the Health Department can:

- Record Notice of Non-Compliance against the property title.
- Issue fines.
- Stop Work orders.
- Impose other legal remedies.

Anyone affected by a decision or action by the Health Department may appeal within 15 calendar days.

Who is responsible to comply with Health Department permit and cleanup requirements?
The property owner is responsible to meet Health Department cleanup and permit requirements. Service providers must ensure permit and notification status before conducting work. Any qualified person may conduct work or complete permitting on behalf of the property owner, but the owner remains responsible.

What about home heating oil tanks?
Heating oil tanks less than 1,100 gallons are exempt from Health Department oversight. The Health Department does not issue permits or keep records for small heating oil tanks. The jurisdictional Fire Marshall issues decommissioning permits and may have records on file. Lenders may require proof of decommissioning during a home sale. We provide guidance for home owners and buyers at [www.tpchd.org/ust](http://www.tpchd.org/ust).

Questions about the UST Program?
Contact Rob Olsen at [rolsen@tpchd.org](mailto:rolsen@tpchd.org) or (253) 798-2855.

Visit [www.plia.wa.gov](http://www.plia.wa.gov) for help with home heating oil tank removal or cleanup from leaks.