



HEATING OIL

# Hillside

HEATING + COOLING

# OIL HEAT 101

A Beginner's Guide To Understanding, Operating,  
And Maintaining Your Oil-Fired Heating System



OIL DELIVERY



HEATING



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Keeping Your Paws  
Comfy All Year Long!



# **OIL HEAT 101**

**A Beginner's Guide To Understanding,  
Operating, And Maintaining Your Oil-Fired  
Heating System**

<b>OIL HEAT 101.....</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>A BEGINNER’S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING, OPERATING, AND MAINTAINING YOUR OIL-FIRED HEATING SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>0</b>
Welcome.....	4
Introduction To Heating Oil.....	5
What is Heating Oil?.....	5
Why Choose Heating Oil for Home Heating?.....	6
Benefits of Heating Oil Over Other Heating Methods.....	6
Understanding Oil-Fired Heating Systems.....	7
Components of a Heating Oil System:.....	7
How Does a Heating Oil System Work?.....	7
Types of Heating Oil Systems:.....	8
Operating Your Oil-Fired Heating Systems.....	10
Identifying an Oil Furnace:.....	10
Identifying an Oil-Fired Boiler:.....	10
How to Operate an Oil-Fired Furnace.....	11
Operating Your Oil-Fired Boiler: A Step-by-Step Guide.....	12
How to Check Your Oil Levels.....	13
How to Order Heating Oil.....	16
Full-Service Heating Oil Provider In DE, PA, & MD.....	17
Automatic Delivery:.....	17
Call-In Or Will-Call Delivery.....	18
One Price For Fuel Oil.....	19
We Operate A Fleet Of Modern, Clean, And Well-Maintained Vehicles.....	19
Budget Billing.....	20
How to Order Heating Oil.....	22
Importance of Regular Maintenance.....	22
DIY Maintenance Tips and When to Call a Professional.....	22
When To Call A Professional.....	23
Oil Leaks.....	24
How To Prevent Heating Oil Leaks.....	24
How To Check For Oil Leaks.....	26
What To Do If You Discover A Heating Oil Leak.....	27
If you have an emergency, call Hillside at 302-738-4144 or 410-398-2146.....	29

What To Do When You Have No Heat.....	30
No Heat Checklist For Oil-Fired Furnaces.....	30
Ensure You Have Oil in Your Tank.....	31
Get a Gauge Stick.....	31
Measure the Contents of the Tank.....	31
Heating Maintenance.....	33
Hillside’s Heating Maintenance Plan.....	34
Heating Maintenance Plan Terms and Conditions.....	36
When To Get Your Furnace Repaired.....	37
Honest Furnace Repair Services.....	38
When To Replace Your Furnace.....	39
Why You Can Trust Hillside.....	41

# Welcome

**Welcome to “A Beginner’s Guide to Understanding, Operating, and Maintaining Your Oil-Fired Furnace.”** Whether you’re new to heating oil or an experienced user looking for specific guidance, this guide is designed to give you a clear understanding of how oil furnaces work and how to keep them running efficiently. Inside, you’ll find everything from the basics of furnace operation to practical maintenance tips and troubleshooting advice. Whether you’re exploring a new system or looking to get the most out of your current one, our goal is to provide you with the knowledge you need for safe, reliable, and efficient home heating.

Heating oil has long been a preferred option in colder climates, valued for its dependable warmth and efficiency. This guide is here to help you—whether you’re just starting out with heating oil or aiming to deepen your knowledge—so that you can enjoy consistent comfort throughout the year.

We’ll cover the essentials: how oil-fired systems function, steps you can take to maintain them, common problems and solutions, and how to choose the right fuel provider. Along the way, we’ll share practical insights from over 70 years of experience serving families with dependable heating solutions.

At Hillside Oil Heating & Cooling, our mission is to make sure you feel confident and comfortable with your heating system. Let’s explore the world of heating oil together and ensure your home stays warm, efficient, and cozy season after season.

Chapter One:

# Introduction To Heating Oil

## What is Heating Oil?

Heating oil, also known as fuel oil, is a refined petroleum product primarily used to heat residential and commercial buildings. It is crucial in ensuring comfort and warmth, especially in colder climates.

**Production and Composition:** Heating oil is produced by refining crude oil and then separating it from other petroleum products. Its formulation is designed for efficient and clean combustion in heating systems. This involves removing impurities and adding specific additives to enhance performance and reduce emissions.

**Storage and Delivery:** Heating oil is typically stored in large tanks on the user's property. These tanks can be above-ground or underground and are designed to contain the oil until it is needed safely. Delivery of heating oil is managed by specialized companies, such as Hillside Oil Heating & Cooling, which transport the oil directly to these storage tanks using tanker trucks.

**Distinction from Diesel Fuel:** While heating oil and diesel fuel are derived from crude oil and share some similarities, they are distinct products. Heating oil is specifically formulated for furnaces and boilers, focusing on stable, efficient burning. Diesel fuel, on the other hand, is formulated for use in engines and contains different additives to enhance performance under various operating conditions.

## Why Choose Heating Oil for Home Heating?

Homeowners often choose heating oil for its reliability and efficiency, particularly in regions with cold winters. Unlike natural gas, which requires access to a gas line, heating oil is stored on-site, making it accessible in areas where gas infrastructure may be limited. This self-contained system ensures consistent heating even during power outages, providing peace of mind for homeowners.

## Benefits of Heating Oil Over Other Heating Methods

Heating oil offers several advantages compared to alternative heating methods:

- **Efficiency:** Modern oil-fired furnaces can achieve efficiency ratings of over 90%, converting a high percentage of fuel into heat for your home.
- **Reliability:** Heating oil is readily available across a wide geographic area, ensuring dependable heat regardless of external conditions.
- **Longevity:** Oil-fired heating systems can last decades with proper maintenance, offering a durable and reliable heating solution.

By choosing heating oil, homeowners can benefit from a well-established and reliable method of home heating that has been refined over decades to meet the demands of modern living.

Chapter Two:

# Understanding Oil-Fired Heating Systems

A heating oil system consists of several key components that work together to provide warmth and comfort to your home. Understanding these components and how they function is essential for effectively operating and maintaining your heating system.

## Components of a Heating Oil System:

1. **Oil Storage Tank:** The oil storage tank is crucial for storing heating oil on your property. It serves as a reservoir for the fuel that powers your heating system. These tanks can be situated in different locations, including within the confines of your home, such as the basement or garage, or outside the house.
2. **Burner:** The burner is responsible for combusting heating oil. It ignites the oil, producing a flame that heats the heat exchanger.
3. **Heat Exchanger:** The heat exchanger transfers heat from the combustion process to the air or water circulating through your home's heating system.
4. **Distribution System:** Depending on the type of heating oil system, this can include ductwork and vents for forced-air systems or pipes and radiators for hydronic (hot-water) systems.

## How Does a Heating Oil System Work?

- **Thermostat Control:** A thermostat monitors the temperature in your home and signals the heating system to turn on when the temperature falls below the desired level.

- **Ignition:** Upon receiving the signal from the thermostat, the heating oil is pumped from the storage tank to the burner, where it is atomized (broken into small droplets) and mixed with air.
- **Combustion:** The burner ignites the oil-air mixture, producing a flame that heats the heat exchanger.
- **Heat Transfer:** Air or water passes over the heat exchanger, absorbing heat. The heated air is circulated throughout your home via ducts and vents (in a forced air system), or the heated water is circulated through pipes and radiators (in a hydronic system).

## Types of Heating Oil Systems:

**Forced air systems utilize a furnace or air handler to heat air distributed throughout the home via ducts and vents.** These systems are favored for their efficiency in quickly heating spaces and maintaining consistent home comfort levels. An oil-fired furnace is a specific type of forced air system that uses heating oil as its primary fuel source. The furnace features a burner that atomizes heating oil and mixes it with air before igniting it. This combustion process generates heat within the furnace. The heat from the combustion process is then transferred to air via the heat exchanger. Finally, a blower or fan pushes the warmed air through the ductwork and vents, distributing it throughout the building to provide consistent warmth to all areas.

**Hot water or hydronic systems operate by circulating heated water through a network of pipes to radiators, baseboard heaters, or radiant floor heating systems.** These systems are prized for their energy efficiency, quiet operation, and the gentle, even distribution of heat they provide. A boiler, often referred to as an oil-fired boiler, is a type of hot water system classified under hydronic systems. The boiler uses

heating oil as a fuel source to heat water through a combustion process. The heating oil is ignited within the boiler's combustion chamber, generating heat. The heat from burning the heating oil is transferred to the water within the boiler's heat exchanger. Once heated, the water is circulated through a network of pipes to the home's radiators, baseboard heaters, or radiant floor systems. As the water flows through these systems, it releases warmth into the surrounding air, ensuring consistent and efficient heating.

By understanding the components, operation, and types of heating oil systems, you will be better equipped to manage your heating system effectively, ensuring efficient operation and comfort in your home throughout the heating season.

## Chapter Two:

# Operating Your Oil-Fired Heating Systems

Before you begin operating your oil heating system, it's essential to correctly identify whether you have an oil furnace or an oil-fired boiler. Here's how you can distinguish between the two:

### Identifying an Oil Furnace:

1. **Appearance:** Oil furnaces typically resemble large metal boxes connected to ductwork that distributes heated air throughout the home.
2. **Components:** Look for components such as a burner assembly, combustion chamber, blower, and air filter. These are essential parts of an oil furnace.
3. **Location:** Furnaces are often found in basements, utility rooms, or crawl spaces. They require access to ductwork for air distribution.
4. **Operation:** Furnaces heat air directly and use blowers to circulate the warm air through ducts to vents and registers in your home.

### Identifying an Oil-Fired Boiler:

1. **Appearance:** Oil boilers are usually smaller than furnaces and are connected to pipes rather than ducts. They may resemble a large metal tank with pipes coming in and out.
2. **Components:** Look for components like a burner assembly, pressure gauge, water level gauge, and expansion tank. Boilers heat water circulated through pipes to radiators, baseboard heaters, or radiant floor heating systems.
3. **Location:** Boilers are commonly located in utility rooms, basements, or dedicated boiler rooms. They are connected to a system of pipes that distribute hot water throughout the building.

4. **Operation:** Boilers heat water, which circulates through the heating system and releases heat through radiators or other heat emitters.

By understanding these key differences in appearance, components, location, and operation, you can confidently identify whether you have an oil furnace or an oil-fired boiler in your home. This knowledge will help you operate and maintain your heating system effectively.

## How to Operate an Oil-Fired Furnace

Operating an oil furnace can initially seem daunting, but it's straightforward with some knowledge and understanding. Follow these steps to manage your oil furnace confidently:

**Step 1:** Familiarize yourself with the furnace's controls. Locate and understand the thermostat, on/off switch, and fan switch.

**Step 2:** Check the oil level. Ensure the tank has sufficient oil by checking the gauge or using a dipstick. If levels are low, contact a professional for refilling.

**Step 3:** Set the thermostat to your desired temperature to signal the furnace to start.

**Step 4:** Turn on the furnace by switching the on/off switch to "on." Allow a few moments for the furnace to ignite and begin circulating warm air.

**Step 5:** Use the control switch to adjust the fan speed. A slower speed circulates air more gently, while a higher speed increases circulation.

**Step 6:** Monitor the furnace's operation. Regularly check the thermostat to ensure the desired temperature is maintained. Also, listen for any unusual noises or odors. If detected, turn off the furnace and seek professional assistance.

**Step 7:** Turn off the furnace. When finished, switch the on/off switch to "off."

## Operating Your Oil-Fired Boiler: A Step-by-Step Guide

Before operating your oil boiler, familiarize yourself with your oil heating system basics:

**Step 1:** Understand the boiler's controls. Locate and learn how to operate the thermostat, pressure gauge, and water level gauge.

**Step 2:** Check the oil level. Using the gauge or dipstick, ensure the tank has sufficient oil. If levels are low, arrange for refilling.

**Step 3:** Turn on the boiler. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to ignite the burner.

**Step 4:** Monitor the boiler's pressure and water levels. Adjust settings as needed to maintain proper operation.

**Step 5:** Adjust the thermostat to set your desired heating temperature.

**Step 6:** Monitor the boiler's operation. Regularly check for any leaks, unusual noises, or odors. If any issues arise, turn off the boiler and consult a professional.

**Step 7:** Turn off the boiler. When you no longer need heating, follow the manufacturer's instructions to shut down the boiler safely.

## Chapter Three:

# How to Check Your Oil Levels

Checking your heating oil levels may seem daunting, but it's simple. Regularly monitoring your oil levels ensures that your furnace never runs out of fuel and you never have to pay for an emergency delivery.

**Here's a step-by-step guide to help you check your heating oil levels:**

**Step 1:** Locate the oil tank. Your heating oil tank is typically located in the basement, garage, or outside your home. It will be a large, cylindrical tank with a gauge or dipstick on the side.

**Step 2:** Check the gauge or dipstick. Most tanks have a gauge or dipstick for checking the oil level. The meter typically features a dial or sliding indicator to display the current oil level, while the dipstick has a marker or line indicating the oil level.

**Step 3:** Read the gauge or dipstick. Depending on the type of gauge or dipstick, you may need to read it in a specific way. For example, some meters have a dial showing the tank's percentage of oil. In contrast, others have a sliding indicator that indicates the amount of oil in the tank in inches. If you're using a dipstick, you'll need to remove it from the tank and wipe it clean before checking the oil level. The marker or line on the dipstick will indicate the oil level.



**Step 4:** Record the oil level. Once you've read the gauge or dipstick, note the oil level. You should check the oil level every few weeks to ensure you're not running low on fuel.

**Step 5:** Order more oil if necessary. If the oil level is getting low, it's time to order more. You can call your oil supplier and place an order for more fuel. Most suppliers will deliver the oil to your home and handle the installation.

By following these simple steps, you can ensure that your heating oil tank is always full and that your furnace never runs out of fuel. It's a small step that can save you a lot of hassle and money in the long run.

***Please note:** Checking or filling your heating oil tank should only be done with professional assistance. Oil tanks can be hazardous and should be handled by trained professionals. As a safety precaution, always inspect for leaks or damage before assessing the oil level. If you detect any leaks or damage, contact a professional immediately.*

### **You CAN run out of heating oil.**

If you have used electric or natural gas heat, you know those sources don't "run out." In contrast, the heating oil in your oil tank can and will run out if not refilled.

### **Tanks should never be empty.**

Order more oil if your tank is less than a quarter full. Running out of heating oil is worse than running out of gasoline in your car.

**You can measure the oil in the tank in several ways.**

If you have an oil gauge, you need to read it. If you don't, you can use a dipstick or a rod to determine the amount of oil in inches.

**Remember: it's best to be conservative and order your heating oil early rather than in a no-heat emergency.**

What is the best way to manage this risk? Sign up for [FREE Automatic Delivery](#) and let Hillside Oil Heating and Cooling worry about managing your heating oil.

## Chapter Four:

# How to Order Heating Oil

Ordering heating oil is a straightforward process that ensures your home remains warm and comfortable throughout the heating season. Follow these steps to order heating oil efficiently:

1. **Check Your Oil Level:** Before placing an order, check the level of heating oil in your tank. You can do this by checking the tank gauge or using a dipstick, if necessary.
2. **Compare Prices:** Research local heating oil suppliers and compare prices. Look for reputable suppliers with good customer reviews and competitive pricing.
3. **Contact Suppliers:** After choosing a supplier, contact them to place your order. Provide them with the amount of oil you need based on your tank's capacity and current level.
4. **Schedule Delivery:** Arrange a convenient delivery time with the supplier. Consider factors such as your home's heating needs and local weather conditions.
5. **Prepare for Delivery:** Clear a path to your oil tank and ensure easy access for the delivery truck. Remove any obstacles that might hinder the delivery process.
6. **Receive and Inspect Delivery:** Be present on the day of delivery to receive the oil. Verify the quantity delivered matches your order. Also, check for any signs of leaks or damage during the delivery process.
7. **Payment:** Pay for the oil as per the supplier's payment terms. Some suppliers may offer payment options like cash, credit/debit card, or electronic transfer.
8. **Keep Track of Oil Levels:** Regularly monitor your oil levels to ensure you order before they run low. This helps avoid running out of heating oil unexpectedly.

Following these steps, you can efficiently order heating oil and ensure your home remains warm and comfortable throughout the heating season.

## Full-Service Heating Oil Provider In DE, PA, & MD.

**Hillside Heating & Cooling** is a full-service oil heating company that delivers heating oil, plus provides installation, repair, and maintenance services. We provide both automatic delivery and call-in delivery services. We offer home heating oil year-round, and our fleet of state-of-the-art vehicles ensures reliable deliveries.

**Your Local Heating Oil Company:** At Hillside, we are grateful to have a team of local area residents who stand by their work and understand the importance of getting it right. We know your home comfort needs better than an oil company run by a distant parent corporation. Our customer service agents are real people in our local office—not call center agents in another city (or country!) who aren't truly invested in helping you out.

### Automatic Delivery:

Automatic delivery is available for customers who never want to worry about checking their fuel level. Hillside uses a mathematical formula to determine when its customers' oil tanks need refilling. The formula uses accumulated data from previous deliveries and local weather conditions to predict when future deliveries will be made. In the case of new accounts, estimates are based on a specific type of home similar to yours. We work with each homeowner to schedule the most convenient delivery. Heating oil deliveries may be made only if there is no outstanding balance on your account and no unsafe conditions exist for filling, venting, or tank problems.

### **Calculating Automatic Deliveries**

The degree-day system is the standard for calculating when deliveries are made in the industry. This link, [www.weatherdatadepot.com](http://www.weatherdatadepot.com), will help you understand how the

degree-day system works and track your personal fuel oil consumption by comparing seasons from past years to see if you may need deliveries sooner than usual this winter.

**Sign Up Today for Automatic Heating Oil Delivery!** Our free automatic delivery program is one way we help our customers get the most out of their heating oil. By scheduling deliveries in advance, we can ensure your house has what it needs when you need it—which helps us deliver on-time, daily deliveries. Now, you can enjoy hassle-free heating oil delivery service in Cecil County, MD, New Castle County, DE, and Southern Chester County, PA with Hillside Oil Heating & Cooling.

**Call Hillside Heating and Cooling today at 302-738-4144 (DE & PA) or 410-398-5879 (MD), or [contact us](#) to sign up for automatic heating oil delivery.**

### **Call-In Or Will-Call Delivery**

Call-in delivery enables customers to schedule and purchase fuel oil at their convenience. This is helpful for those who want more control over their spending on the product. To schedule a delivery, call our office. We will arrange for delivery based on availability in your area. The normal delivery time is Monday through Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Call Hillside Heating and Cooling today at **302-738-4144** (DE & PA) or **410-398-5879** (MD) to schedule your home heating oil delivery.

### **Fair and Up-Front Pricing**

Many companies like ours offer various programs or levels of customer service, each with different pricing based on several factors. We very specifically avoid anything along those lines, as we believe that different levels of plans, tiers, or customer service groups

are not fair to all customers. Plus, when too many options are available, things can get confusing. We also do not charge extra for automatic delivery services. The truth is that an automatic delivery customer saves an oil company money because the oil company can deliver at its convenience.

At Hillside, everyone receives the same price, whether you are a COD customer paying at the time of delivery or if you are on one of our automatic delivery plans. If you are a credit billing customer, you can receive a .05 cent per gallon discount if your balance is paid within ten days. Prices are subject to change based on market prices, which are always available on our website at [www.HillsideHVAC.com](http://www.HillsideHVAC.com).

Hillside also doesn't charge any account termination fees. We view anyone choosing Hillside as their provider as a compliment to the company. However, sometimes things change, and we understand if you decide to move on.

## **We Operate A Fleet Of Modern, Clean, And Well-Maintained Vehicles.**

Reliable equipment enables Hillside to arrive on time and provide prompt, efficient service. Safety is a primary concern for our customers and employees. Routine equipment maintenance and safety training for our drivers help keep you and your home safe. This, in turn, keeps our business costs lower, which allows us to pass those savings on to you with the lowest possible prices.

## **Budget Billing**

A [monthly budget plan](#) is an effective way to avoid large peak-season bills. Monthly payments allow customers to spread their heating expenses throughout the year.

Calculating rates with Hillside's program is straightforward; we estimate your total annual expenditures and divide them among 12 monthly payments. We start our budget year in the summer, so that money paid during the summer allows you to build up credit that will be used when deliveries are made in the fall and winter. Your budget is based on the average number of gallons you use per year multiplied by an estimated average fuel price for the upcoming season. If you are enrolled in any of our maintenance plans, we factor that into your monthly payment amount as well.

If you are interested in our heating oil budget plan or have questions about the **FREE** program, please contact our office at **302-738-4144** or **410-398-2146** Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Here are the links to the budget sign-up form if you want [more detailed information](#) or to sign up for our plan.

## Importance of Regular Maintenance

Regular maintenance ensures your heating oil system operates efficiently and safely. Annual inspections and tune-ups help identify and address minor issues before they become major problems. Routine maintenance includes cleaning the burner and heat exchanger, checking and replacing filters, inspecting the oil tank and lines for leaks, and testing the thermostat and safety controls. These steps improve the system's performance and extend its lifespan.

Neglecting regular maintenance can lead to decreased efficiency, higher energy bills, and an increased risk of breakdowns. It can also compromise your home's safety, as an improperly maintained system may pose fire hazards or produce dangerous carbon monoxide levels. Annual professional inspections are recommended to ensure all components function correctly and address any necessary repairs.

### DIY Maintenance Tips and When to Call a Professional

While some maintenance tasks require professional expertise, there are several steps homeowners can take to maintain their heating oil systems:

1. **Regularly Check the Oil Level:** Monitor the oil tank gauge and schedule deliveries before the oil level drops too low.
2. **Replace Air Filters:** In forced-air systems, change the air filters every 1-3 months to maintain efficient airflow and optimal indoor air quality.
3. **Clean Around the System:** Keep the area around your furnace or boiler clean and free from debris to ensure proper airflow and reduce fire risks.

4. **Inspect the Flue Pipe:** Look for any signs of corrosion or blockages in the flue pipe, which could affect the system's venting.
5. **Monitor the Thermostat:** Regularly check the thermostat's batteries and settings to ensure it's functioning correctly.

## When To Call A Professional

- **Annual Tune-Ups and Inspections:** A licensed technician should perform a comprehensive system check-up, including cleaning the burner and heat exchanger, inspecting the oil tank and lines, and testing all safety controls.
- **Addressing Leaks or Smells:** If you notice oil leaks or unusual smells, contact a professional immediately to avoid potential hazards.
- **System Repairs:** A professional should assess and repair any malfunctioning components or unusual noises to ensure the system operates safely and efficiently.

By following these guidelines and prioritizing regular maintenance, you can ensure your heating oil system runs smoothly and provides reliable and efficient warmth for your home throughout the heating season.

Chapter Five:

## Oil Leaks

Oil leaks in heating systems pose significant risks to both health and safety. These leaks can lead to severe environmental damage, costly repairs, and potential health hazards for residents. Even a small oil leak can quickly escalate, contaminating soil and groundwater and creating fire hazards. Moreover, the fumes from leaking oil can cause respiratory problems and other health issues. Understanding the dangers of oil leaks and the importance of regular system maintenance is crucial in preventing these serious consequences. In this article, we will examine the various risks associated with oil leaks and outline the steps you can take to protect your home and the environment.

### How To Prevent Heating Oil Leaks

Preventing oil leaks is crucial for maintaining your heating system and ensuring the safety of your home. Here are a few steps you can take to prevent oil leaks and keep your system running smoothly:

**Step 1—Schedule Regular Maintenance:** The best way to prevent oil leaks is to schedule regular maintenance for your heating system. Annual inspections and tune-ups by a qualified technician can identify and address minor issues before they become major problems. This includes cleaning the burner and heat exchanger, checking and replacing filters, and testing the thermostat and safety controls.

**Step 2—Check for Leaks Regularly:** Between maintenance appointments, it's a good idea to inspect your system for leaks regularly. Look for any signs of oil on the ground near your tank, as well as any unusual smells or sounds coming from your furnace. If you notice any symptoms of a leak, call a professional immediately.

**Step 3—Replace Old or Damaged Parts:** Over time, parts of your heating system can become worn or damaged, leading to leaks. If your technician finds any old or damaged parts, they must be replaced immediately to prevent leaks. This includes inspecting the oil tank and lines for signs of rust, corrosion, or physical damage.

**Step 4—Keep Your Tank Level:** Keep your oil tank level stable. An unlevel tank can cause stress on the tank and its fittings, leading to leaks. Call a professional to fix the issue if your tank is becoming unlevel.

**Step 5—Insulate Your Oil Lines:** Insulating your oil lines can help prevent leaks by keeping the oil from freezing during winter. This cost-effective solution can save you money in the long run by preventing damage to your system.

**Step 6—Get Your Tank Inspected:** Have your tank inspected by a professional to check for any signs of corrosion or damage. Regular inspections can help you identify potential leaks before they become a problem.

**Step 7—TANK-GUARD®:** Consider enrolling in the [TANK-GUARD® program](#), which provides corrosion protection and warranty service for aboveground fuel oil tanks up to 330 gallons in capacity. This program ensures that eligible tanks are shielded from the harmful effects of internal corrosion by applying an effective liquid corrosion inhibitor, thus reducing the risk of tank failure. Moreover, when your tank is registered in our program, you also benefit from substantial financial protection through our generous tank warranty, should tank replacement become necessary.

Following these preventative measures can significantly reduce the risk of oil leaks, ensuring your heating system operates efficiently and safely. Regular maintenance and inspections are crucial for preventing leaks and maintaining your home's safety. If you have any doubts or concerns about your heating system, don't hesitate to call our office at **302-738-4144** (DE & PA) or **410-398-5879** (MD) or [contact us](#) for Heating Oil Maintenance.

## How To Check For Oil Leaks

Knowing how to identify a heating oil leak and what to do if you find one is essential for homeowners. A heating oil leak can be a severe problem, not only because of the potential environmental damage, but also because it poses a fire hazard. Here's a guide on spotting a heating oil leak and what steps to take if you find one.

**Step 1—Watch for signs of a leak.** Some common signs of a heating oil leak include a strong odor of oil, discoloration or staining on the ground near the tank, and an unexplained decrease in the oil level. If you notice any of these signs, you must take action immediately.

**Step 2—Check for leaks.** If you suspect a leak, inspect the tank, fill pipe, and oil lines for any signs of leaks. Also, look for any signs of damage, such as holes, cracks, or loose fittings. If you find a leak, immediately turn off the oil supply to the tank.

**Step 3—If you discover a leak, call a professional immediately.** A qualified technician can repair the leak and ensure the tank is properly sealed, preventing further damage and safety hazards. Contact Hillside Oil Heating & Cooling at **302-738-4144** (DE & PA) or **410-398-5879** (MD) for prompt and reliable assistance. Our experienced team is well-equipped to handle leaks efficiently and effectively, providing peace of mind and ensuring the safety of your home.

## What To Do If You Discover A Heating Oil Leak

If you suspect a heating oil leak, taking immediate action is crucial. A leak can cause severe environmental damage and pose a fire hazard. Follow these steps to help keep your home and community safe. When in doubt, always call a professional.

**Step 1—Turn Off the Oil Supply:** To stop the leak, the first step is to turn off the oil supply to the tank. This can be done by turning off the valve that controls the oil flow to the tank.

**Step 2—Evacuate the Area:** If a significant amount of oil spills, evacuate the area to avoid inhaling the fumes, which can be especially dangerous in confined spaces like basements.

**Step 3 – Call for Professional Help:** Call a professional immediately. They can repair the leak and ensure the tank is properly sealed. They will also advise on how to clean up the spill and safely dispose of contaminated materials. For assistance, contact Hillside Oil Heating & Cooling at:

- **302-738-4144** (DE & PA)
- **410-398-5879** (MD)

**Step 4 – Report the Leak:** After the leak is repaired, it's crucial to report it to your local state authorities, the fire department, and the National Response Center. Prompt reporting helps prevent further damage and ensures the safety of the community.

- **Delaware:** Report spills to Delaware's 24-hour spills hotline at **1-800-662-8802**. Verizon Wireless customers should dial #367.

- **Pennsylvania:** Report spills to the Southeast Regional Office 24-hour hotline at [484-250-5900](tel:484-250-5900).
- **Maryland:** Report spills to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) at [\(866\) MDE-GOTO](tel:866-MDE-GOTO).

### **Step 5: Clean Up the Spill**

Cleaning up a heating oil leak can be a complex process that trained professionals best handle. The specific steps for cleaning up a heating oil leak depend on the severity and location of the leak. However, here are some general guidelines for cleaning up a heating oil leak:

1. **Containment:** The first step in cleaning up a heating oil leak is to contain the spill to prevent it from spreading. This may involve installing booms or other barriers around the spill to keep the oil from spreading further.
2. **Absorption:** Once the spill has been contained, absorbent materials such as cat litter, oil-absorbent pads, or boom can be used to soak up the oil. These materials can be spread over the spill and then removed for disposal.
3. **Recovery:** After the oil has been absorbed, it must be recovered from the absorbent materials. This can be done using vacuum trucks or other specialized equipment.
4. **Treatment:** After recovering the oil, it must be treated to remove any remaining contaminants. This may involve using chemicals or other types of treatment to break down the oil and remove any remaining pollutants.
5. **Disposal:** Once the oil has been treated, it must be disposed of properly. This may involve sending it to a refinery or waste-to-energy facility for processing, or it may need to be sent to a hazardous waste facility for disposal.

6. **Restoration:** The site must be restored to its original condition after cleaning. This may involve replacing soil, planting vegetation, and taking other steps to correct the environment.

It's important to note that different states have different regulations and requirements for cleaning up a heating oil leak, and it's crucial to follow your state's specific guidelines. It's also essential to consult with a professional, as they can advise on the best course of action and ensure that the cleanup is done correctly and safely.

**If you have an emergency, call Hillside at 302-738-4144 or 410-398-2146**

# What To Do When You Have No Heat

## No Heat Checklist For Oil-Fired Furnaces.

### 1. Check your thermostat.

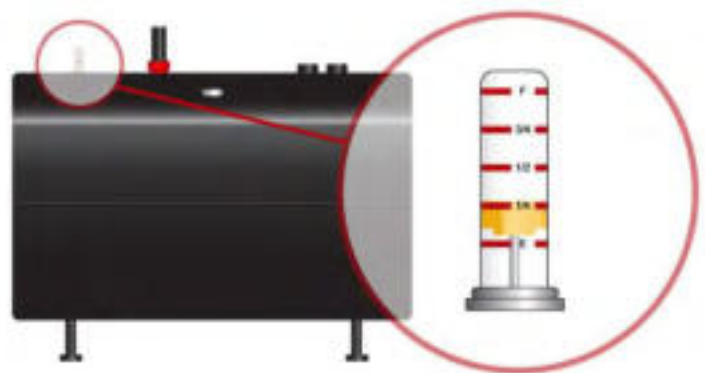
Ensure your thermostat is set **to heat and high enough to call for heat**, meaning the desired temperature is higher than the room temperature. Additionally, check that your thermostat batteries are in good condition.



### 2. Check Oil Levels.

- **Locate your tank:** Your oil tank is likely located in the basement or outside the house, relatively close. It's a giant metal tank.
- **Find the fuel gauge:** Your oil gauge is a clear tube with a float inside and located on top of the oil tank. A standard residential oil tank holds 275 gallons. Based on that size, the following readings indicate how many gallons of oil your tank contains. The float goes up and down according to how much fuel is in the tank. Reading your gauge is like reading the gas gauge in your car. If the float is not visible at the bottom of the tube, the tank is empty or close to empty.

- F (full) = 275 gallons
- 3/4 = 200 gallons
- 1/2 = 130 gallons
- 1/4 = 70 gallons
- 1/8 = 40 gallons
- E (empty) = near empty



Do NOT always trust your gauge; they can be finicky. You will need a straight stick to check your heating oil level in an oil tank manually. Remember: We recommend ordering heating oil when your tank is one-quarter full rather than in a no-heat emergency. Sign up for our [Worry-Free Winter](#); we'll manage everything for you.

## **Ensure You Have Oil in Your Tank**

Do NOT always trust your gauge; they can be finicky.

## **Get a Gauge Stick**

The first step in manual tank gauging is to get a gauge stick. This tool is also known as a "tank stick" or "dipstick." While some use a wooden yardstick or metal rod, the best gauge sticks are varnished to provide the most accurate reading. A varnished stick limits the spread of oil on the stick and provides a clear measurement. Ensure the stick you choose is straight, without warping or bending.

If you use an electronic tank-level monitor instead, choose one that can measure to the nearest eighth of an inch.

## **Measure the Contents of the Tank**

Follow these steps to manually measure the contents of your oil tank with a gauge stick:

1. Turn the top fill valve cap counterclockwise and remove it from the tank.
2. Lower the stick gently until it touches the bottom of the tank.
3. Bring the stick back up and read the depth of oil to the nearest eighth of an inch.
4. Record the measurement in your manual tank gauging record.
5. Wipe the measuring stick clean with a dry cloth.

6. Lower the tank stick and measure again. Record these results.
7. Secure the top-fill valve cap to prevent leaking.

### 3. Locate the emergency shutoff switch.

Usually, the emergency shutoff switch is located near the basement steps and next to your heating system. Make sure the switch is in the “ON” position. These switches resemble light switches and can accidentally get turned off if you have guests. This happens more frequently than you might think.



### 4. Check your power source.

Locate and open your electrical panel. It's usually found in the basement or a utility room. Check for and [fix any blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers](#). Sometimes, our furnace technicians “repair” the furnace by ensuring it gets power.

### 5. Reset your system.

Sometimes, a simple system reset is all that's needed. Locate your heating system's burner, press the reset button ONCE (and only ONCE), and listen for the system to start. If you need to open the door to access your furnace, be sure to close it after pressing the reset button.



Chapter Seven:

## Heating Maintenance

Maintaining your heating oil furnace or boiler ensures a warm and comfortable home. Regular maintenance extends the equipment's lifespan and enhances its efficiency while minimizing the risk of breakdowns and costly repairs, as recommended by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Annual tune-ups by certified HVAC technicians are essential. Potential issues are identified and resolved during these inspections, optimizing furnace performance and reliability. Changing the oil filter annually and the air filter every three months is also vital to prevent clogs that can decrease efficiency and increase maintenance expenses.

Regularly monitoring oil levels is crucial to avoid running out of fuel, which can damage your furnace or boiler. Additionally, inspecting for leaks, corrosion, or damage is essential to prevent environmental harm and fire hazards.

Homeowners can ensure their heating oil furnace or boiler operates efficiently and safely by prioritizing regular maintenance, including tune-ups, filter changes, oil monitoring, and inspections for leaks and damage. This proactive approach keeps homes comfortable and reduces long-term energy costs.

At Hillside, we service all major brands of furnaces, including boilers. Regular furnace cleaning and maintenance help prevent frequent failures, inefficient performance, and poor indoor air quality. Hillside Heating & Cooling is the leading furnace cleaning and maintenance specialist in New Castle County, DE, Cecil County, MD, and Southern Chester County, PA.

## Hillside's Heating Maintenance Plan

Regular furnace cleaning and maintenance help prevent equipment failures, inefficient performance, and poor indoor air quality. Hillside Heating & Cooling's maintenance plans include an annual tune-up to remove dirt and debris that accumulates within the system throughout the year, as well as discounted parts and labor, and priority service options. Our goal is to ensure your air conditioning or heat pump always runs efficiently. Not only will your system perform better and have a longer lifespan, but you will also save money on your utility bill and avoid unexpected breakdowns.

Hillside offers two types of annual maintenance plans:

- **Basic Coverage Plan** provides 15% service and parts discount, one annual tune-up at a discounted rate, priority scheduling and availability outside of regular working hours, and more.
- **Premium Coverage Plan** includes annual tune-up(s) for covered unit(s) at no extra charge, plus 25% service and parts discount, priority scheduling and availability outside of regular working hours, and more.



To learn more and enroll in one of our [maintenance plans](#), please call us at **302-738-4144** (DE&PA) or **410-398-2146** (MD) or download our [maintenance plan](#).

Chapter Eight:

## When To Get Your Furnace Repaired

This chapter will explore the indicators that suggest your oil-fired furnace may need repairs. While oil-fired furnaces are a common choice for heating homes, they are prone to malfunctions like any mechanical system. Recognizing these signs is essential to maintaining efficient operation and preventing expensive breakdowns, ensuring your furnace operates reliably when needed.

**Reduced heating capacity:** If your furnace is not producing enough heat, it may indicate a problem with the burner or the fuel delivery system. A clogged fuel filter or a malfunctioning nozzle could cause this. A professional technician can diagnose and repair the issue.

**Strange noises:** If your furnace is making weird noises, such as banging, popping, or whistling, it could be a sign of a problem with the burners, the blower, or the ductwork. A technician can identify the noise source and make the necessary repairs.

**Soot buildup:** If you notice soot buildup around the furnace or on the walls and ceilings, it could indicate a problem with the burners or the chimney. Soot buildup can also signify a carbon monoxide leak, a severe safety hazard. A professional technician can diagnose and repair the issue.

**Frequent cycling:** If your furnace turns on and off frequently, it could indicate a problem with the thermostat or the limit switch. A technician can diagnose and repair the issue.

**Yellow flame:** If the flame in your furnace is yellow instead of blue, it could indicate a problem with the burners or the fuel delivery system. A yellow flame can also signify a

carbon monoxide leak, a severe safety hazard. A professional technician will be able to diagnose and repair the issue.

It is essential to have your oil-fired furnace inspected and serviced annually to keep it running efficiently and safely. Call a repair technician if you notice any of the signs above or if your furnace malfunctions. Ignoring these issues can lead to costly breakdowns and pose a safety risk.

Suppose you notice reduced heating capacity, strange noises, soot buildup, frequent cycling, or a yellow flame. In that case, it's time to call a professional technician to repair your oil-fired furnace. Also, remember to have your furnace inspected and serviced annually to prevent any issues.

## Honest Furnace Repair Services

When you schedule a [furnace repair service from Hillside Heating Oil & Cooling](#), we'll thoroughly inspect and accurately determine why your furnace stopped working. Then, before we begin any furnace repair, our honest HVAC technicians will explain why your furnace has stopped working, review your options, and let you decide how to proceed with no pressure.

### All furnace repairs include:

- A call from your technician before arrival so you'll know just when to expect us
- Diagnostic and safety check of your equipment
- Fixed price quote including all parts and labor required – no hidden charges

**If you have a heating emergency, call Hillside at 302-738-4144 or 410-398-2146**

Chapter Nine:

## **When To Replace Your Furnace**

As a homeowner, it's crucial to stay on top of the maintenance and upkeep of your home, including your furnace. But how do you know when it's time to replace your furnace? Here are a few signs to look out for:

First and foremost, pay attention to the age of your furnace. Most furnaces have a lifespan of approximately 15 to 20 years. If your furnace is approaching or has surpassed its expected lifespan, it may be time to consider a replacement.

Another key indicator is the efficiency of your furnace. Suppose your energy bills have been steadily increasing despite no changes in usage. In that case, it may indicate that your furnace is not running as efficiently. A newer, more efficient furnace could save you money in the long run.

In addition to age and efficiency, pay attention to any unusual noises or odors coming from your furnace. For example, suppose you notice banging, squealing, or other unusual sounds. In that case, it could signify a problem with your furnace's internal workings. Similarly, suppose you smell gas or burning. In that case, you must turn off your furnace immediately and call a professional to inspect it.

Finally, consider a replacement if you've frequently called for repairs. Frequent repairs can be costly, and a new furnace may be a more cost-effective solution in the long run.

If you're experiencing any of these issues with your furnace, it's a good idea to consult a professional to determine if it's time for a replacement. Remember, a well-maintained

furnace can help keep your home warm and comfortable while also saving you money on energy costs.

Call Hillside Heating and Cooling today at **302-738-4144** (DE & PA) or **410-398-2146** for a furnace emergency. (MD) or [contact us](#) to schedule service (*some furnaces even qualify for local rebates*). Hillside offers [furnace maintenance](#), repairs, and FREE estimates for new furnace sales and installation in DE, PA, and MD.

# Why You Can Trust Hillside

## BBB International Torch Award for Ethics

On November 19, 2019, Hillside Oil Heating & Cooling achieved elite status after being honored with the 2019 BBB International Torch Award for Ethics, making it one of just four companies across North America to be recognized by the [Better Business Bureau Institute for Marketplace Trust and the first Delaware company to win the prestigious award.](#)



The BBB International Torch Award for Marketplace Excellence recognizes companies that exemplify best practices, leadership, social responsibility, and high standards of organizational ethics, ultimately benefiting their customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, and communities.

## A+ Rating from the Better Business Bureau

BBB ratings represent BBB's opinion of how the business will likely interact with its customers. The BBB rating is based on information BBB can obtain about the business, including complaints from the public. BBB seeks and uses information directly from businesses and public data sources.



BBB assigns ratings from A+ (highest) to F (lowest). In some cases, BBB will not rate the business (indicated by an NR or "No Rating") for reasons that include insufficient information about a company or ongoing review/update of the business's file.

## **Torch Awards for Ethics**

The Torch Awards for Ethics honor companies whose leaders demonstrate exceptional personal character and ensure that the organization's practices meet the highest standards of ethics, thereby generating trust. These companies' high level of trust is recognized among their employees, customers, and communities. The award embodies the Better Business Bureau's mission to be the leader in advancing marketplace trust.



## **BBB Rush Memorial Award for Outstanding Family-Owned Business**

Outstanding family-owned and operated business that exemplifies the ideals of community and civic services



NEWARK, DE (May 16, 2024) – Hillside Oil Heating & Cooling is the proud recipient of the 2024 Rush Memorial award from the Better Business Bureau of Delaware. Named for Edward M. Rush, Sr., the “Rush Award” has come to signify excellence and integrity in the business world. One award is given annually to an outstanding family-owned and operated business that exemplifies the ideals of community and civic services. The Rush Memorial award was presented during the Better Business Bureau of Delaware’s 59th Annual Awards Celebration at DuPont Country Club in Wilmington, DE.

## Verified Reviews

Don't take our word for it...hear directly from our customers.

We are honored to have received over 3,000 certified ratings, reviews, recommendations, and testimonials from our heating and cooling customers on [Google](#), [Facebook](#), and our website. This is why we're the trusted home comfort experts in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

If your home or business requires heating oil, diesel fuel, or gasoline, or you need a heating and air conditioning company that offers sales, installation, service, or repair, you can feel confident in choosing Hillside.

## Our Mission: To Keep You Warm in the Winter and Cool in the Summer While Doing Customer Service Right.

**Hillside Oil Heating & Cooling** has been family-owned and operated for 70 years, providing comprehensive services that include [heating oil delivery](#), [Heating](#) and [Air Conditioning](#), and [Commercial Fuel](#) solutions to residential and commercial clients in New Castle County, DE, Cecil County, MD, and Southern Chester County, PA. Our routine operations involve delivering home heating oil, diesel fuels, and gasoline.



Three generations of family attitudes and values have allowed us to serve our customers and communities successfully. Everything about Hillside is locally owned and operated. We do not answer to any parent or mother corporation in some far-off land.

Real human beings still work here and answer our phones. We have no touch-tone mazes to navigate to speak to a human who can assist or answer questions. Customer

service is the most important thing. We know what it is like to be a customer and how we like to be treated. We take pride in thinking like our customers when dealing with them.

By choosing Hillside, you're endorsing a locally rooted, family-driven enterprise that sustains the essence of our area. The entire Hillside team appreciates your patronage and support.

Support of Hillside is for our local, homegrown, family-owned businesses in our area. Thank you from everyone at Hillside for your business.

For more information about Hillside, visit [www.HillsideHVAC.com](http://www.HillsideHVAC.com)