



# Versus



## Dispelling some more common myths about oil heating systems

**False Myth #1:** “An oil furnace or boiler is like having a dinosaur in your basement”

**The Facts:** Not even close!

This is a very common misconception, due in part to the fact that the experiences of many come from outdated furnaces. But comparing a 40 year old oil furnace to an alternately fueled modern day heating system makes about as much sense as comparing the emissions and mileage of a 55 Chevy pickup truck with that of a 2005 hybrid electric vehicle. Today’s oil heating systems are about 95% cleaner than that of their counterparts from 30-40 years ago. That translates to a combustion emissions 99.9% clean. Fuel oil is also hotter burning than its gas based counterparts. Fuel oil contains approximately 45% (or 144,000 BTU’s vs. ~99,000 for natural gas) more heat per unit than that for natural gas. This translates into more heat (and hotter heat) for your money. That hotter heat means faster hot water recovery times and warmer air coming out of your registers then you would get with the other heating fuels!

**False Myth #2:** “Oil stinks” or “Oil furnaces stink”

**The Facts:** Not anything that you’ll be able to smell

In it’s liquid form, yes oil does have an odor. Of course, in an enclosed fuel storage tank like the one you would have in your basement you’d never know that fact. Oil is pumped into your basement storage tank from the fill pipe located on the outside of the house. The displaced air is vented back outside leaving nothing inside. When your furnace runs, the gases from the combustion are vented out through your chimney and the air from your house is routed through the furnace and picks up warmth through the heat exchanger. Since your heated air never comes in direct contact with the fuel oil or the combustion gases, no fumes should ever enter your house in a properly maintained oil heating system. If you were to smell fumes, you would want to call us, it means you need service on your heat system. Don’t worry about your safety though, the fumes are not harmful, and we have sprays which can neutralize the smell. Also, fuel oil is a combustible liquid which will not ignite in it’s liquid form, it must first be vaporized (making it much safer than the other forms of heat).

**False Myth #3:** “Natural Gas is cheaper than fuel”

**The Facts:** The opposite is actually true

A natural gas bill can be one of the more complicated things to decipher but at least two things are certain; the amount that someone gets “locked into” for natural gas is not the end of the story, and fuel oil has been the better value choice for more than the last ten years (including this season). The price of natural gas per therm that is often advertised does not include a myriad of fees and additional charges which can add a significant percentage on top of the cost of the actual gas. What’s more, during the

warmer months, you will pay a higher rate per therm and will be stuck with a “connection fee” no matter how much fuel you use or don’t use. You always pay the market rate of the day for gas and cannot stock up when the price is low. Doing a real world comparison of natural gas to fuel oil shows that a fuel oil customer actually can save a significant amount every year.... and you’ll enjoy better hot water recovery times and warmer air as well.

**False Myth #4:** “I am going to have a fuel spill and the EPA will be showing up at my door”

**The Facts:** Not while we’re taking care of your fuel needs

A modern oil tank is engineered to provide you with excellent protection against leakage. As opposed to tanks made 40 or more years ago, a modern tank is built of thicker gauge steel, is coated with a corrosion resistant coating, and has the furnace supply valve located on the bottom instead of the side of the tank, which will prevent water from collecting at the bottom, causing further corrosion.

Before we fill any fuel tank at a customer’s house, we perform a full safety inspection to assure the integrity of the tank, fill pipe, fuel lines, and tank legs. Only after we are satisfied as to the safety of your fuel storage system do we allow our drivers to fill your tank. Upon completion of our safety inspection, we will fully inform you of your tanks’ condition and we can even perform many minor repairs and adjustments free of charge. *(Please note: if your oil supplier does not ask to inspect the tank, beware. As the homeowner and owner of the storage tank, its integrity is your responsibility. Most reputable companies are now insisting on an inspection. If they don’t, they would most likely not be around to help if there is a problem.)*

On the subject of leaks, an oil tank should not suddenly burst open and spill its entire contents. Large releases are usually due to either a failure of the tank legs or from improperly installed fill piping, both of which we inspect before filling. A tank which begins to leak first develops a dark stain somewhere along the bottom. In time, the stain would become more pronounced and after a good length of time a slow drip will start. Our customer’s tanks are normally inspected on a regular basis either when the drivers have an opportunity to look at them or whenever a serviceman is working on your heating system.

One additional thing to note: If you have your heating system cleaned by us on an annual basis (something we highly recommend anyway for maintaining the efficiency of the furnace/boiler) we automatically include a “Tank Protector” ultrasound tank inspection. Once covered and as long as your system is maintained annually, ***your fuel oil tank is insured for full replacement cost*** if it ever leaks or if the thickness of the metal in the tank wears down.

**“So, if oil’s a better deal, then why do they say ‘Natural Gas is your best energy value’?”**

Well, to put it simply, the natural gas lobby has done a great job of advertising these past years. Natural gas’ biggest advantages are that there is no storage tank in your yard or basement and that everyone just assumes that it’s the way to go. As a smart consumer, you are already taking the first step. You’re educating yourself about the differences, the facts, and just as importantly, the fiction. If you want proof of any of the information I’ve given you above, feel free to stop by and ask. I even have a couple of natural gas bills to help prove a cost comparison. One other big advantage for oil (and for propane too); we’re a small family business. We’re your neighbor, and we’ll know who you are. No large corporation can match that kind of difference.