

Should I Clean My Tank or Replace It?

Has your oil service person told you that you need a new tank? Is it because you are having sludge problems (fouled lines, filters, etc.)? Perhaps you just have an old oil tank and are concerned that it might leak and you don't want to have to worry about big clean-up costs. Do you even know whether you have an accumulation of sludge in your tank? Whatever your situation, oil dealers would love to charge you \$2500 (or more) to replace your tank. How can you know whether it needs replacing - and what your other options might be?

First, what do your fuel filters look like after a year's service? Are they coated heavily with a black, grease-like build-up? (See for yourself - don't take your service person's word, as some oil dealers offer their service personnel a commission on every new tank they sell.) If so, that is sludge and you probably have an accumulation of sludge in your tank. If not, then your tank is probably free of sludge and might be in great shape.

If you don't have sludge symptoms, simply treating once or twice a year with Fuel Right will keep your whole system free of sludge - and your tank, if it's in good shape today, should last as long as your house. Should you have sludge symptoms and your tank is more than 15 years old, there's a good chance that you have deep pitting corrosion in the tank and should probably replace it.

Even if you have sludge in your tank, if it's ten years old or less, chances are that it is structurally sound and can be made to last many more years. Before making a final decision as to whether or not to scrap it, have it tested by a qualified testing company (Preferably not your oil dealer - although he can probably recommend one in your area.) Ask for a vacuum test, as that is the most dependable type. A low-pressure leak test can be misleading if you have through pits in the tank wall that are plugged temporarily with sludge. Vacuum testing usually costs \$400-\$600 per tank. If your tank passes a vacuum test, you can either 1) have it physically cleaned, then treat with Fuel Right to finish the job and keep it clean, or 2) clean it more gradually with Fuel Right treatment alone. In either case, the pitting corrosion will stop with your first Fuel Right treatment.

Finally - and this will get an argument from your oil dealer - if you decide to replace your tank, have him or someone else draw out as much fuel as they can, putting it through a fine screen or filter to remove the "chunks" of sludge, and save for reuse in your new tank. It is essential, however, that this ugly looking fuel be shock treated with Fuel Right as soon as it goes into your new tank. Otherwise it will start growing new sludge and start corroding your brand new tank immediately. If you listen to your fuel dealer and dispose of the old fuel, the cost of that plus replacing it with new fuel might well cost you more than replacing the tank itself. If you put this black fuel - *with* Fuel Right treatment - into your tank, it will probably discolor (but not foul) your filter and will burn just fine.