

**DCA GEARS UP FOR WINTER SEASON;
INSPECTS HEATING OIL DELIVERY TRUCKS AND OFFERS TIPS TO HOMEOWNERS**



Official DCA Seal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SDCA Inspections Help Ensure Homeowners Get the Heating Oil They Pay For

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) today reminded New Yorkers to be vigilant when purchasing home heating oil, and to take the necessary precautionary steps to ensure they don't get shortchanged.

"Getting less than what you pay for, particularly when prices are high, can leave you feeling chilly," said DCA Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra. "We inspected nearly 1,500 home heating oil delivery trucks operating in New York City last year, checking that each meter registers accurately. We're happy that compliance is high, but consumers should still take steps to protect themselves as we continue to remain vigilant."

DCA inspects home heating oil delivery truck meters annually. During these routine inspections, the DCA confirms that the truck's meter accurately registers how much oil it pumps, and places an official seal on the back of each truck where it is easily visible. DCA also checks for faulty air eliminator devices, where without an intact seal, retailers could modify their meters and increase the chance of shortchanging their customers. In addition, a faulty meter might register dispensing more home heating oil than the consumer actually receives.

Last year the DCA condemned 104 meters, or 7% of all meters inspected. Inspections are done during surprise visits to truck refueling terminals throughout the City, as well as at the agency's test station in Brooklyn.

DCA offers the following tips to homeowners:

- Check the truck's meter for an official DCA seal and request to see a copy of the company's certificate of inspection. The official DCA seal located on the back of each fuel oil truck, and certificate of inspection certifies that the truck has been inspected, and when.

- Check your receipt.
By law, retailers must provide a receipt showing how much oil was received and how much was paid per unit.
- Check your own oil tank gauge before and after filling.
Although some gauges may be inaccurate due to age, many can give a rough estimate of how much oil was received.
- Get a written contract and read the fine print.
Always get a written contract that includes all costs, delivery schedule, gallons promised, and any other details that have been agreed upon between the provider and customer. Make sure that the salesperson or manager of the distributor signs the contract before payment. Also, BEFORE SIGNING, check for hidden costs, fees or minimum purchasing requirements that may appear in the contract.
- Use a reputable supplier.
Call 311 to check a retailer's complaint history.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law, as well as other related laws, at thousands of businesses throughout New York City. DCA licenses more than 60,000 businesses in 55 different categories in New York City and educates both consumers and businesses alike through free publications, community and business outreach, and other informational materials.

To file a complaint, or for copies of DCA's free consumer and business education guides, call 311 or visit DCA online at www.nyc.gov/consumers