**PRESS RELEASE - Revised**

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**Media Contact:**

Tim Cropley, Spill Program Manager

Department of Environmental Conservation

802- 249-5346, [Tim.Cropley@vermont.gov](mailto:Tim.Cropley@vermont.gov)

**DEC on How to Safely Pump Out Basements**

*Montpelier, Vt.* – Widespread flooding in Vermont has caused many basements to fill with water and, in some cases, cause a release of oil from heating oil tanks in the basement. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is offering guidance for basement cleanup.

**If there is no evidence of oil** in the water – such as an oil sheen (nothing floating on the water or no oil odor) – the water may be pumped out to the ground (preferably) or storm drains.

**When oil or petroleum is present** floating on the water in a basement or container, report the situation to DEC at **800-641-5005 (24/7) or 802-828-1138 (during the workday)**.

DEC can help direct contractors to assist with the pump-out. Contractors will pump out the basement from the top of the liquid surface to recover any floating oil first. (Pumping liquid out from the floor level or below the liquid surface will likely cause floating oil to coat everything in the basement making for a more significant cleanup.)

Once any oil is skimmed off the water or if there is no evidence of oil or an oil sheen floating on the water, it may be pumped out to the ground.

Basements with oil and water should only be pumped out to the ground surface outside after consulting with the DEC.

If contractors or vac trucks are not available to remove the oil from basement water first. DEC will work with you to provide guidance on how to pump the water from the top down to assure the oil is removed first followed by water only.

For more information on flood recovery resources from the Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation, Fish and Wildlife Department, or the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, visit <https://ANR.Vermont.gov/Flood>.

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Stephanie Brackin (she/her)  |  Communications Coordinator

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

1 National Life Drive, Davis 2, Montpelier, VT 05620-3901

(802) 261-0606 | [stephanie.brackin@vermont.gov](mailto:stephanie.brackin@vermont.gov)

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