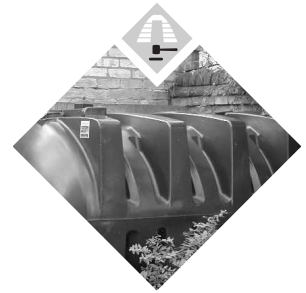




Domestic oil storage in England & Wales



Prevent Oil Pollution

Oils and fuels cause more water pollution incidents than anything else. Oil contamination harms plants and animals, damages the soil and destroys natural habitats.

As well as being environmentally costly, spilt oil can also be hugely expensive (in terms of clean-up costs and lost fuel, for example). And because it is illegal to cause pollution, the person responsible may be prosecuted.

Yet, with proper maintenance and good practice, many of the oil pollution incidents that occur every year could easily be avoided. This document outlines the requirements for domestic oil storage in England and Wales and looks at how to prevent pollution.

Current regulations require certain domestic oil storage tanks to have secondary containment, such as a bund, to prevent oil escaping from the tank and its ancillary equipment (local fill point, vent pipe, sight gauge, taps and valves etc)



Legal requirements and how to comply

England and Wales

Since 1 April 2002, all new and replacement oil-tanks serving boilers must comply with The Building Regulations (i). These require (among other things) that:

- tanks and connected pipes be constructed, installed and protected to reduce the risk of oil leakage and environmental damage;
- a notice be fixed to the tank about what to do if oil is spilt or lost;
- a risk-assessment be carried out, and if any of the following points apply, then secondary containment is required;
- capacity is greater than 2,500 litres;
- the tank is within 10m of a 'controlled water' such as a stream, ditch, river, lake, pond, canal or coastal water;
- it is above hard ground or hard surface that could allow spilled oil to enter controlled water;

- it is sited where any oil spillage could run into an open drain or loose-fitting manhole cover;
- it is within 50m of sources of drinking water such as a well, borehole or spring;
- the vent-pipe outlet cannot be seen from the fill point.

A British Standard guidance document (ii) applies to domestic oil storage tanks, in addition to any building regulations.

There are several ways to provide secondary containment. You can install a proprietary integrally banded tank-system. This must be manufactured to appropriate standards (those produced by OFTEC (The Oil Firing Technical Association) for example) (iii). Or you could build a suitably designed bund using masonry or concrete. The Environment Agency has more information (iv).

Your local authority, which controls the installation of any new or replacement domestic oil storage tank, will require a Building Notice to show that work complies with Building Regulations (unless the work is already covered under full Building Regulations approval)

Alternatively, the work can be done by a 'competent person', ie, someone who can 'self-certify' their own installation work. OFTEC-qualified and registered installation technicians are regarded as competent.

In England, The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 apply to domestic tanks with a capacity of 3,501 litres or more. These requirements are more detailed and further information is available(v). Similar regulations may apply in Wales in due course.

Scotland has its own legislation for oil storage. Contact the Scottish Environment Protection Agency for advice.

To prevent pollution

To reduce the risk of an oil pollution, follow these simple guidelines:

- Site fuel tanks and pipework as far as possible from drains, streams and ponds;
- Provide secondary containment for your tank and its ancillary equipment, even if it is not a legal requirement;



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- When installing a new tank and/or pipework, always use a qualified technician, such as those registered by OFTEC. This will ensure that the relevant British Standards are followed, as well as the manufacturer's installation instructions;
- Make sure an 'Oil Care' notice is stuck on the tank with information on what to do in the event of a spillage. These notices are generally supplied with new tanks. You can also get them from the Agency. The tank should also be clearly labelled with safe capacity and fuel type;
- Every week, inspect your tank, its ancillary equipment and pipework. Look for corrosion, damage, interference and signs of leaks;
- At least once a year, get a qualified technician, such as those registered by OFTEC to service and inspect your oil-fired installation, including the boiler, tank, ancillary equipment and all pipework;
- Be alert to possible leaks by carefully noting your pattern of oil use. A small leak can, over time, add up to a large loss of fuel. This is especially important if underground pipes are used;
- If you notice or suspect a leak, ask a qualified technician, such as those registered by OFTEC to investigate it immediately and carry out any necessary repairs;
- Check your fuel stocks carefully before re-ordering oil. Do not allow your tank to be overfilled – this is your responsibility;
- **NEVER LEAVE SIGHT GAUGE VALVES OPEN.** Sight gauge valves that do not close automatically should not be used. Use only British Standard sight gauge valves, which close automatically. The valve should be activated only when level readings are being taken. If you need to monitor levels continuously, have the sight gauge removed and a suitable contents measurement device installed instead;
- It is good practice to always supervise deliveries;
- Check that your delivery company is happy (in terms of health & safety and pollution prevention) with your tank and the delivery arrangements;
- If delivery is to a fill-point some distance from the tank, you need secondary containment and overflow prevention alarms/devices. This is a British Standard (ii) recommendation and may be a legal requirement if the The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 apply (v);
- Whilst it won't actually prevent pollution it is wise to make sure your insurance policy covers your oil loss and pollution clean up costs on your premises.

If you have an oil spill or leak

- Stop the flow at source;
- Use either a proprietary oil spill kit or an absorbing

material such as sand or earth to contain the oil and prevent it from entering drains or watercourses;

- Never use detergents or a hose to wash away spilt oil;
- Oil will contaminate soil and could pollute ground-water so if oil has soaked into the ground, you must quickly remove all contaminated soil to prevent long-term problems on your land or any neighbouring land;
- Call the Environment Agency 24-hour emergency pollution hotline 0800 807060.

Further information

- (i) The Building Control Regulations 2000 – Approved Document J Combustion Appliances and Fuel Storage ISBN 0-11-753494-3

Available from The Stationery Office bookshops and accredited agents:
telephone orders 0870 600 5522;
www.safety.odpm.gov.uk/bregs

- (ii) BS 5410 Part 1 1997 – Code of Practice for Oil Firing, installations up to 45kW output capacity for space heating and hot water supply purposes ISBN 0-580-27671-6

Available from the British Standards Institution:
BSI 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL

- (iii) TI/133 Assessment of the Risk of Environmental Damage being caused by Spillage from Domestic Oil Storage Tanks
TI/131 Siting of Oil Storage Tanks for Single family Dwellings

Available from OFTEC: Foxwood House, Dobbs Lane, Kesgrave, Ipswich IP5 2QQ. Tel. 0845 6585 080
Fax: 0845 6585 181 Email: enquires@oftec.org

These publications, as well as information about your nearest OFTEC registered technician from the website at www.oftec.org

- (iv) Pollution Prevention Guidance Note 2 – Above Ground Oil Storage Tanks

Concrete Bunds for Oil Storage
Masonry Bunds for Oil Storage
Oil Care tank sticker (not available from website)
Oil Storage Regulations leaflet on The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001
Available from the Environment Agency: Tel. 08459 333 111
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

- (v) Guidance Note for the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 PB5765.

Available from DEFRA: Tel. 08459 556000
www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/quality/oilstore/index.htm

- (vi) Customer Information Leaflet - The safe handling and storage of fuel oils.

Available from Member Companies of the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers. Details of FPS Members in your area are available from:
The Federation of Petroleum Suppliers, 3 Slaters Court, Princess Street, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6BW.
Tel. 01565 631313 Fax. 01565 631314
Email: office@fpsonline.co.uk

For more information on the Oil Care campaign go to www.environment-agency.gov.uk/oilcare



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