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Domestic Oil Storage Regulations Guide

A domestic oil storage installation has a tank that serves a single dwelling with a storage capacity of not more than 3,500 litres. Larger tanks must be bunded, i.e. placed within a secondary containment.

The oil storage regulations in England & Wales are enforced by the Local Authority, Building Controls department and the Environmental Agency.

For safe storage, you will need to consider fire and pollution risks. It is unlikely that a fire would be started by the contents of a domestic oil storage tank. However, the tank needs to be protected from a fire that originates nearby.

For example, tanks should be sited:

- 1.8m away from non-fire rated eaves of a building
- 1.8m away from a non-fire rated building or structure (e.g. garden sheds)
- 1.8m away from appliance flue terminals
- 760 mm away from a non-fire rated boundary such as a wooden boundary fence
- 1.8m away from openings, such as doors and windows, in a fire rated building or structure (e.g. brick built house/garage).

If it is not possible to meet these requirements, then a fire rated barrier of at least 30 minutes should be provided, extending 300mm higher and wider than both ends of the tank.

For the Control of Pollution, existing domestic tanks less than 3500 litres do not normally have to include a bund unless it is sited:

- within 10m of "controlled water" such as a stream, ditch, river, lake or coastal water
- within 50m of a well, borehole or spring
- if an oil spillage could run into an open drain
- in a place where there is a risk of collision (e.g. if the tank is near a road or driveway)

Replacement tanks with a capacity more than 2500 Litres must be bunded under Building Regulations.

It's important that oil storage tanks are inspected annually.

MAINTENANCE

Once they are installed oil tanks are often forgotten and receive very little attention until something goes wrong despite the introduction of the Oil Storage Regulations and stiff penalties for not complying.

Tanks must be maintained by a competent person, preferably by an OFTEC registered engineer. We recommend that your tank installation is checked by your boiler engineer when he comes to service the oil boiler. The engineer should also make sure that oil delivery drivers can monitor the level while filling. A remote indoor display unit alone is insufficient.

Delivery drivers must be satisfied they can safely deliver into a storage tank and may refuse to do so if any of these requirements are not met.

The home owner is responsible for making sure the tank and fittings are in good condition. If this is not done insurance cover may be invalidated. The costs of cleaning up can be very high. It is no exaggeration to say costs can run into millions of pounds if, in a worse case situation, an underground aquifer is polluted.

Our Fuel Oil customers can obtain further advice on telephone number 01322 349035 or send an email to info-kent@fueiloils.co.uk.

VAT

VAT is charged at the lower rate of 5% for domestic use. HM Revenue & Customs require oil suppliers to confirm supplies are for domestic use for deliveries exceeding 2300 litres or annual supplies exceed 10,000 litres. A written declaration is required from the customer,