

The OFTEC home guide to...



Domestic Oil Storage



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This Home Guide applies to oil storage tanks up to 3500 litres capacity supplying oil to single family dwellings for heating and cooking purposes.

For information on larger tanks, or non-domestic sites such as churches or village halls, please refer to the OFTEC Information Sheet entitled “Non-Domestic Oil Storage”.

Depending on where you live, regulations may vary slightly. The information here is a general guide, and you should check with your nearest OFTEC Registered Technician which regulations affect you.

All about tanks

Modern oil storage tanks come in all shapes and sizes and can be made from plastic or steel. The size and type that your OFTEC Registered Technician recommends will depend on your individual requirements.

It is recommended that the chosen tank is manufactured to OFTEC Standards (OFS T100 for plastic or OFS T200 for steel). A list of tank manufacturers can be found in the Equipment Directory on the OFTEC website at www.oftec.org

Protecting the environment

To minimise the risk of pollution from an oil spill, some installations must have secondary containment (a bund). This can be achieved by either choosing an integrally bunded tank or constructing a bund around a tank. The bund must be capable of holding at least 110% of the tank's contents.

Your OFTEC Registered Technician will be able to advise whether you need a bunded tank using a standard risk assessment. Typically, installations near a river, well or any controlled water are likely to require bunding.

Tank location

It is unlikely that a fire could be started by a domestic oil storage tank and its contents. However, tanks are required to comply with fire separation distances in order to adequately protect the stored fuel from a fire or heat source, which may originate nearby.

Tanks should be sited:

- 1.8m away from non-fire rated eaves of a building;
- 1.8m away from a non-fire building or structure (e.g. garden sheds);
- 1.8m away from openings (such as doors or windows) in a fire rated building or structure (e.g. brick built house/garage);
- 1.8m away from oil fired appliance flue terminals;
- 760mm away from a non-fire rated boundary such as a wooden boundary fence;
- 600mm away from screening (e.g. trellis and foliage) that does not form part of the boundary.

If it is impossible to comply with these requirements, then a fire protection barrier with at least 30 minutes fire rating should be provided. A minimum separation distance of 100mm is required between the tank and fire rated barrier unless a larger distance is specified by the tank manufacturer.

In some situations, the oil storage tank can be sited inside a building such as a garage or outhouse. Installations of this type require the tank to be self contained within a 60 minute fire

rated chamber. Your OFTEC Registered Technician can advise further on this type of installation.

Back to bases

The need to provide suitable bases and supports for oil storage tanks is of paramount importance for reasons of both safety and environmental protection. The base should be:

- Adequate for the weight of the tank;
- Non-combustible, impermeable and level;
- Constructed of concrete, paving stones or stonework;
- Large enough to extend 300mm beyond all sides of the tank.

If an oil storage tank is inadequately supported, the tank itself can be weakened leading to the eventual failure and escape of the stored fuel. During the life of an installation an oil storage tank base will need to provide continual structural support, even though ground conditions may alter from season to season and year to year.

Building regulations

Oil storage tank installations need to comply with regional Building Regulations. In England & Wales, OFTEC Registered Technicians can self certify their own work without involving Local Authority Building Control. But if you choose to use someone who isn't registered with a 'Competent Person' scheme like OFTEC, then you will have to obtain a Building Control Notice and arrange for



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Why an oil fired boiler should be serviced regularly

an inspection which can be costly and time consuming. Similar rules apply in Scotland where you may need to apply for a warrant. Your OFTEC Registered Technician can advise you on this.

For more information on Competent Persons, visit www.competentperson.co.uk.

Annual Inspection

It is important that oil storage tanks are inspected annually, preferably by an OFTEC Registered Technician.

Finding an OFTEC Registered Technician

The OFTEC website enables you to locate your nearest Registered Technicians by postcode entry. OFTEC Registered Technicians are appropriately qualified and insured to work in your home. They can also advise on energy efficiency.

You can also find a list of local Registered Technicians under the OFTEC logo in the 'Heating Engineers' section of your local pages.

For further information on oil heating and cooking, please see www.oftec.org



OFTEC

Foxwood House, Dobbs Lane, Kesgrave, Ipswich IP5 2QQ

Tel: 0845 65 85 080 | Fax: 0845 65 85 181 | Email: enquiries@oftec.org

www.oftec.org

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