



Home guide to domestic oil storage up to 3500 litres

If it is impossible to comply with the separation distances, then a fire protection barrier (with a minimum 30 minutes fire rating) must be provided. The separation distance required between the tank and the fire barrier may vary and will be specified by the tank manufacturer.

It is possible to site an oil tank inside a garage or out-house; however, they need to be self-contained within a 60 minute fire rated chamber.

Looking after your tank

It is your responsibility to maintain the oil tank on your property – spills and leaks can be extremely costly to clean up and can cause contamination to ground water supplies or even building foundations. It is important that you check whether your home insurance covers oil spills or leaks and whether there are any stipulations or limitations to your policy.

OFTEC recommends carrying out a visual check every six months and particularly after periods of extreme weather conditions as this can put tanks under additional stress. These are some of the warning signs to look out for:

- Rust
- Splits or cracks
- Bulging
- Gauges falling over or not working
- Subsidence on the base
- Sudden increase in usage of oil
- Tanks overgrown with foliage
- Strong oil smell

If you have any concerns, always contact your local OFTEC registered technician who can advise fully.

Why use an OFTEC registered technician?

OFTEC registered technicians are trained and assessed to ensure they work competently and safely to recognised industry standards for oil, solid fuel and/or renewable heating systems.

OFTEC provides an official photo ID card for each technician and checks that registered businesses hold appropriate public liability insurance for working in customer premises. In England and Wales they can self-certify new installations without the need for local building control inspections and a similar optional scheme is available in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

Find your local OFTEC registered technician

Visit www.oftec.org to use our search function or to check whether a business is currently registered. Alternatively, please call our enquiries line (below) and one of our team will be happy to help.

About OFTEC

OFTEC plays a leading role in raising standards within the heating industries of the UK and Republic of Ireland. Our trade association represents the interests of liquid fuel heating equipment manufacturers and we develop course and assessment material for training providers. We have over 9,000 technicians registered on our UKAS accredited competent person scheme. We also operate an online shop selling equipment for heating engineers.

For further information please see www.oftec.org.



OFTEC

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Oil storage tank installations must comply with regional building regulations – this leaflet provides general guidance, your local OFTEC registered technician will be able to provide further advice on your particular circumstances.

This guidance applies to oil storage tanks up to 3500 litres capacity supplying oil to domestic properties. For information on larger tanks or non-residential sites please contact OFTEC's technical team on 01473 626 298 or technical@oftec.org

In England and Wales, OFTEC registered technicians can self-certify that their work complies with building regulations. If you use an installer that isn't registered with a competent person scheme such as OFTEC, then you will need to obtain a Building Control Notice and arrange for an inspection, which can be costly and time consuming. In Scotland, you may need to apply for a warrant.

About your oil tank

Modern oil storage tanks come in all shapes and sizes and can be made from plastic or steel to suit 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 approved tank manufacturers can be found in the equipment directory on the OFTEC website.

In some regions, to minimise pollution risk from oil spills, it is now mandatory for tanks to be bunded. This means there is secondary containment either integral to the tank or built around it. In other regions your OFTEC registered technician will conduct a risk assessment and advise accordingly, but typically tank installations near a river, well, or any controlled water will require bunding.

Oil tanks have an expected working life of around 15-20 years with the risk of a costly tank failure increasing with age. Your oil tank should be inspected every year as part of your annual heating system service and your technician will advise you when you should replace your tank. Your oil delivery contractor may also highlight issues with your tank and, in extreme cases, could refuse to deliver if they have concerns about the tank condition. It is common practice for a contractor to apply a warning notice to an oil storage tank in addition to reporting any defects to you.

Tank support

If an oil storage tank is not adequately supported, it could lead to safety concerns, the eventual failure of the tank and even an oil spill. The base needs to provide continual structural support, even though ground conditions may vary from season to season. The base should be:

- Adequate for the weight of the tank – 1000 litres of oil weighs just under a ton
- Non-combustible, impermeate and level
- Constructed of concrete, paving stones or stonework
- Large enough to extend 300mm beyond all sides of the tank.

Tank location

There are now very specific rules governing the location of tanks and it's important to take these rules into account if you are making subsequent changes to your property. The rules are in place for fire safety reasons and although a fire is highly unlikely to originate in an oil tank, it is very important to protect the stored fuel from fires or heat sources nearby.

The distances that separate an oil tank from doors and windows, wooden fences or buildings and even the eaves of your home or the plants that you have added to disguise the tank are clearly set out on our website.

