

STORING OILS

ARE YOU UP TO DATE WITH THE LATEST REGULATIONS?

The problem with regulations is that the way in which they are explained can make them appear far more onerous than is actually the case. This, however, is no excuse for quietly ignoring them.

Golf courses with an ageing diesel storage tank should have been made aware of changes made in the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 by their fuel supplier. In outline, a diesel storage tank that does not meet current requirements should not be filled with fuel by the supplier's tanker driver.

The nature of customer relations, however, can lead to a blind eye being turned, with some courses possibly 'getting away' with a tank that does not meet more recent regulations. The fact that a farmer may still use a pier mounted single skin diesel storage tank with a gravity filler hose system and no bund is not a relevant argument either; different regulations apply to agriculture.

There are more general oil storage regulations that will also apply to lubricating and hydraulic oils. All aim to ensure that oil is safely stored and the risk of pollution is minimised. These regulations will apply to essentially any type of oil stored in:

- tanks
- intermediate bulk containers
- oil drums
- mobile fuel bowers

In England, the Oil Storage Regulations may apply to oils stored above ground outside in containers with a capacity exceeding 200 litres. In Scotland the regulations will affect you if you store oil of any kind at your premises, regardless of the volume.

The Oil Storage Regulations do not apply in the same way in Northern Ireland and Wales, but it remains best practice to meet the requirements of the regulations to prevent pollution. As an incentive, remember you are committing an offence if you cause pollution, either deliberately or accidentally. If oil from your site, or under your care, causes pollution, you may be prosecuted and fined.

Bear in mind that any oil storage tanks are considered a significant risk if they are less than:

- 10 metres away from any surface water or wetlands
- 50 metres away from any well or borehole.



Storage of petrol is covered by a completely different set of regulations than diesel. Anyone looking into petrol storage needs to take specialist advice.



A self-contained bunded diesel tank can be purchased off-the-peg, with designs including units from 1,000 litres capacity. Steel or plastic tanks are readily available, with a choice of filling systems that will include those with metering units and automatic nozzles. Pictured steel unit comes with integral mounting skids.

Containers, bunds and drip trays

You must use oil containers, and this relates to diesel and other oils, that are strong enough and that are unlikely to burst or leak during ordinary use. Leaky fuel cans break the rules in other words. In Scotland this is the key requirement for portable oil containers with a capacity less than 200 litres. In England, you must store containers within a drip tray, bund or any other suitable secondary containment system or SCS for short. Any SCS should contain any oil that escapes from its container.

For oil tanks, intermediate bulk containers and mobile bowers, your SCS must be able to hold:

- at least 110% of the volume of any single container in the storage area, or
- if there is more than one container, at least 110% of the largest container's storage volume, or at least 25% of their total volume (whichever is greater).

For drum storage your drip tray must be able to hold at least 25% of the total storage capacity of the drums. For fuel oil, you must ensure that the base and walls of your bunds are impermeable to water and oil. The base and walls must not be penetrated by any opening that is used for draining the system either. The aim is to make sure they really are sealed.

What is often not considered is the need to locate all valves, filters, sight gauges, vent pipes

and other equipment, other than fill pipes or draw-off pipes or pumps, within the SCS. Where a fill pipe is not within the SCS, a drip tray must be used to catch any oil spilled when the container is being filled. You should make sure this drip tray is clean and empty before each delivery.

Explained like this, it all sounds very complicated. In practice, it is not that difficult to meet all the requirements, but it could involve buying a new fuel storage tanks and investing in a system in which drums of oil can be safely stored. For the latter, your local oil supplier or equipment dealer should be able to help out with affordable systems.

With regard to diesel storage tanks, self-contained bunded tanks, made from steel or plastic, are readily available in capacities from around 1,000 litres. A critical design aspect of these modern units is that the delivery hose and nozzle, along with any metering device, are all stored within the tank bund and can typically be locked away to help prevent unauthorised use or vandal attack.

You will have a choice of hand pump or pumped system, the latter coming with a choice of mains or battery power. A self-pumping system with automatic nozzle is recommended as it will help reduce the chance of fuel spills. It is well worth specifying a tank with an integral fuel delivery meter fitted. This will enable you to monitor fuel use more accurately.