

IS MY DIESEL SAFE?

By David Mears

We all store fuel, be it in tanks, barrels or jerry cans, but are we sure we have taken necessary steps to make our storage as secure as possible? It does not matter which fuel it is, even red diesel has become an attractive proposition for thieves lately. Many people have either experienced fuel theft or know someone who has suffered.

As HM Revenue & Customs are actively ensuring rebated fuel (red diesel) is not used illegally, storage of white diesel is growing along with the need for improved security. So what steps can be taken and what security measures are available?

Tanks outside buildings are the most vulnerable of course and the old single skin ones standing on blocks with a gravity hose (hopefully you still don't have one!) are the easiest to attack. One swipe with a heavy object usually breaks off the tank valve and allows the contents to flow out freely! This makes the thieves' job very easy but also causes pollution for which you will be liable!

Building a "bund wall" round such an installation often is ineffective as the pressure from a full tank would usually send the contents straight ahead and over such a wall with no valve in place! I personally know of two incidents at golf clubs where this has happened. Remember tanks should be top fill – top offtake and compliance with the Oil Storage Regulations is necessary.

A top offtake means the use of an electric pump, usually, and it is possible to have the controlling switch for this mounted inside a locked building.

A purpose designed bunded tank or better still, a fuel station are the preferred options. You may say that determined thieves will usually succeed but they prefer the easy pickings first!

Most popular at present are diesel fuel stations. These bunded plastic bodied tanks usually feature a compact design and the vertical models take up very little space. Depending on manufacturer, they can include many features such as electronic contents gauges, bund alarms, interior lights, fuel filters, flow meters etc. Most have lockable cabinet doors. Recently, one manufacturer, Harlequin, announced extra security features were to be



The latest Harlequin 2500 fuel station with enhanced locking

fitted as standard to all models; the provision of a 2" oil and corrosion resistant alloy lockable oil tank fill point assembly and a 4" lockable oil tank inspection cap in oil resistant polymer. These features in addition to the lockable access door make these models some of the most secure plastic refuelling tanks on the market. It is encouraging to see that Harlequin has also made these two items available as relatively inexpensive retro-fit kits for existing fuel station customers.

If theft and/or vandalism is really a major concern, then the only remaining answer is to go for the high security of bunded steel derv packs. These extremely robust double-skinned tanks are constructed to keep your fuel as safe as possible. The best models feature steel roller shutter covered access and two locking bolts with keys (placed either side of roller shutter). Often extra features can be included, so it's best to check specifications.

About the Author

David Mears is Joint Managing Director of Highspeed - Course Care, a national supplier of plastic and steel tanks. Servicing and maintenance is available from their OFTEC trained and registered engineers. See www.course-care.co.uk for more details and links to further information.



If your tank is like this one then you need to place it!



High security from a Highspeed Derv Pack with roller shutter door