

The OFTEC easy guide to...

non-domestic oil storage

This easy guide applies to non-domestic oil storage tanks including those supplying commercial buildings, village halls, churches and schools. OFTEC recommends that tanks containing waste oil are treated in the same way as fuel supply tanks.

This easy guide does not cover forecourt (petrol station) operations. Agricultural installations are covered by separate regulations.

For information on domestic tanks, please refer to the OFTEC Easy Guide for Domestic Oil Storage.

All about tanks

Modern oil storage tanks come in all shapes and sizes, and can be made from steel or plastic. There are special tanks designed for underground storage, and these must be installed as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Galvanised steel tanks must never be used for oil storage as this can produce an electrolytic reaction due to the different metals in the system.

It's important to remember that the average hose length from an oil delivery tanker is 30m, and this should be taken into consideration when deciding on a location for a tank.

OFTEC advises choosing a tank that meets minimum standards such as the OFCERT scheme, and you can find a list of tank manufacturers 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, non-domestic oil storage tanks above 200 litres should have secondary containment (a bund). This can either be an integrally bunded tank, or a separate construction around the tank. The bund must be capable of holding 110% of the tank's contents.

Modern tanks manufactured to OFTEC Tank Standards OFS T100 or T200 all have a gauge to measure the contents and come with overfill protection as standard – to minimise any risk of waste or spillage.

Safe oil storage

It's very unlikely that a fire could be started by the contents of an oil storage tank. However, it does need to be protected from a fire that may originate nearby.

Non-domestic tanks under 3,500 litres should be sited at least 2m away from any buildings or boundaries. If it's impossible to comply with this requirement, then a fire barrier rated minimum 60 minutes should be provided, extending 900mm higher and wider than both ends of the tank.

Non-domestic tanks above 3,500 litres should be sited 6m away from any buildings or boundaries. If it's impossible to comply with this requirement, then a fire barrier rated minimum 120 minutes should be provided, extending 900mm higher and wider than both ends of the tank.





It's important that oil storage tanks are inspected annually, and this could be done at the same time the appliance is serviced.

Back to bases

Proper support is vital for any oil storage tank, which will be very heavy once it's full of oil. Steel tanks can be supported off the ground by purpose built masonry piers, or may be supplied with steel supports. Plastic tanks can be supported by a purpose built raised platform on masonry piers, or alternatively can be installed at ground level. All oil storage tanks must be supported adequately by a non-combustible, level base.

Internal oil storage

In some situations, the oil storage tank can be sited inside a building. For those installations, the tank must be self contained within a fire resistant chamber. Any tank above 3,500 litres should be placed on the lowest level of the building.