

# HEATBASE Ltd FACTSHEET 33

## Keeping your Oil Tank Installation Compliant & Safe

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*Oil and LPG Fuel Storage installations including the pipework connecting them to the combustion appliances in the buildings they serve should be located and constructed so that they are reasonably protected from fires which may occur in buildings or beyond boundaries or any other potential source of fire. Fire risk structures are not always defined as a building nor does it mean the building has to be made of combustible material, they can include garages, garden sheds, greenhouses, summerhouses, outbuildings, cars, vans, mobile homes and caravans, static caravans, childrens playhouses, log stores and fixed position barbeques etc. In other words, anywhere a fire may start and spread to the Oil Storage Tank. See interpretation of a building or structure and the definition of a non-fire rated boundary in Fact Sheet 15 Warnings and Non-Compliance to Building Regulations.*

Where an Oil storage tank has been installed after April 2002, it legally had to be installed and sited in conjunction to Building Regulations, British Standards and/or any additional regional requirements which cover Fire Protection and Environmental Pollution. Once installed in this manner the installation must be kept compliant and failure to do so could result in an Environmental Pollution incident or a fire; any insurance claim may be void if you have allowed the Installation to become "non-compliant".

*It should be noted that over the last few years there has been an increased amount of Oil tank fires which have caused major structural damage and also loss of life. In most cases the fires have started in garden sheds which have been erected too close to the Oil tank or Dustbins kept near to the Oil Storage tank.*

*To keep your Installation compliant and safe with regards to Protection against Fire you should read the following:*

1. The area around the Oil tank should be kept clear of foliage and weeds, should not be allowed to become overgrown and should not be used for storage purposes.
2. If you replace or move your existing oil tank it must be brought in line with "current" regulations; the only time this does not apply is if the tank needs to be removed to carry out remedial work to the base or supports before re-installing the original tank in the same location.
3. A Domestic Oil tank of 3500 Litres or less should be installed a minimum of 760mm from a non-fire rated boundary, A Non-Domestic Oil tank of 3500 Litres or less should be installed a minimum of 2000mm from a non-fire rated boundary and a Domestic or Non-Domestic Oil tank with a capacity of 3501 Litres or more should be kept a minimum of 6000mm away from a non-fire rated boundary; therefore any foliage such as hedges, trees and plants which form part of the boundary must be kept at least this specified distance from the Oil tank to reduce the risk of a fire beyond your boundary spreading to the Oil tank. (See Factsheet 32 Fire protection and separation distances for Oil Tanks (England) for more detailed information).
4. Any combustible material or non-fire rated screening or foliage (e.g. trellis, fencing, planting etc.) used to hide or obscure the Oil tank but does not form part of a boundary must be kept a minimum of 600mm from the Oil tank to reduce the risk of a fire spreading to the Oil tank; but must also incorporate a means to allow access for inspection of the oil tank and access to clean oil filters or other maintenance etc. Some people have tried to hide their Oil tanks by building a garden shed around them or encasing them within a purpose made structure; **this is not compliant with Installation requirements!** Due to the Interpretation of a Building or Structure the Oil tank would therefore require additional means of protection and additional regulations will need to be followed (see Factsheet 32 Fire protection and separation distances for Oil Tanks (England)).
5. Bulk LPG storage tanks should be sited at least 3 meters from an Oil storage tank with a volume of up to 3000 Litres (if the Oil tank is above this capacity independent advice should be sought from the Local Authority and Fire Brigade). LPG bottles/cylinders should be kept a minimum of 1 meter from Oil storage tanks and any flue terminal should be a minimum of 300mm above the bottles/cylinder and 1 meter horizontally.
6. If you are building an extension, garden shed, greenhouse or any other building or structure etc., the Oil tank should not be closer than 1.8 metres (Domestic tank 3500 L or less), 2.0 metres (Non-Domestic tank 3500 L or less) or 6 metres (Domestic and Non-Domestic tank 3501 L or more) from a flue terminal, window, door, a non-fire rated wall of the building or fire risk structure or non-fire rated eaves of a building.

**It is the owner/householders responsibility to ensure their system is compliant and safe.**