

HEATBASE FACTSHEET 2

Oil Storage

If your Installation has been marked as “Does not comply with current regulations” or any part of the Installation has been marked as “Fail” please read the following.

REGULATIONS 2002

March and April 2002 saw the biggest shake up in the regulations regarding Oil Installations.

Firstly any Installation or movement of an Oil fired Appliance or Oil storage tank in England and Wales after these dates requires a formal application for PLANNING PERMISSION to the relevant Local authority. The only exception for this is if the Installer has the relevant registration with OFTEC (Oil fired Technical Association for the Petroleum Industry). This enables the Installer to Self-Certify their OWN work, but to finalise the job they must fill in a Completion of Installation certificate, the Installer is also responsible to ensure the appliance is commissioned (but not necessarily to pay for it). The Commissioning Technician also fills in a Commissioning Certificate. The Customer must retain these Certificates to prove the legality of the Installation. If the Installer is not OFTEC registered, after applying and receiving approval from the Local authority the work can commence, and when finished the same documentation must be completed, but the Building Inspector must also check the Installation and paperwork and then sign off the job. No one other than the Building Inspector has the power to sign off another Installers work. Installations in Scotland still require planning permission or a warrant even if the Installer is OFTEC registered.

Any Domestic Oil Storage tank over 3500 litres must be classed as Commercial and falls under the Control of Pollutions regulations and Commercial fire regulations.

CONTROL OF POLLUTION REGULATIONS

March saw the Introduction of the Control of Pollution regulations regarding Commercial/Industrial Oil Storage Installations. In basic terms, any Oil storage tank used in a Commercial/Industrial Installation regardless of Installation date, with a volume of over 200 litres or a Domestic Installation of over 3500 litres must incorporate a Catch pit or Bund for secondary containment of the fuel in the event of an Oil leak or overfill situation.

Any tank, which is classed to be “at immediate risk” had to conform by 1st September 2003, and any other tank by 1st September 2005 regardless of any risk. After this date any Commercial/Industrial Oil storage installation which does not conform will be deemed an illegal installation leaving the owner liable to prosecution with a fine of up to £20,000. In addition, any cost relating to damage or clean up costs will be solely liable by the owner of the tank.

April also saw the Introduction of Part J of the Building Regulations, which concerns the Installation of Combustion appliances, flues and Storage of Liquid fuels.

The regulations concerning Oil Storage can be broken into two sections:

PROTECTION AGAINST FIRE

Adequate fire protection must be given to protect the oil tank from a fire within a building as well as a building from an oil tank fire. Therefore, a radiation barrier with a minimum of a 30 minute fire resistance (60 minute for Commercial) must be installed to give protection and must be at least 300mm (900mm for Commercial) bigger in every direction of the side of the tank, unless the tank is situated at least 1.8m (2m for Commercial) from a flue terminal, window or door or the eaves of a building, or a wall of a building that has less than a 30 minute fire resistance (60 minute for Commercial). These buildings can be any building in which a fire could start such as a house, garage, greenhouse, garden shed, even an old pigsty or derelict building at the bottom of your garden or beyond your boundary! In addition, if the tank is closer than 760mm (2m for Commercial) from a boundary line, the same applies. Regardless of any of the above, the installation should incorporate non-combustible base for the oil tank which should extend a minimum of 300mm each side of the tank.

Where the volume of any oil tank exceeds 3500 litres, reference should be made to the tank manufacturer, local fire authority and property insurers for further guidance.

PROTECTION AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

SECONDARY CONTAINMENT (BUNDING, DOUBLE SKINNED Etc.)

Any oil tank over 200 Litres used in a Commercial/Industrial situation or in the case of Domestic where the volume of the tank exceeds 3500 Litres; must have Secondary Containment (see Control of Pollution Regulations).

Any ordinary, single skinned oil tank can be used for a domestic Installation UNLESS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING APPLY:

If the tank:

Has a capacity over 2500 Litres,

Is located where Oil could run into an open drain or loose fitting manhole cover,

Is located within 50m of Potable water sources such as boreholes, wells or springs,

Is located within 10m of Controlled Water, which includes Coastal waters or Fresh

Inland waters, streams, rivers, reservoirs and lakes as well as ditches, field and garden drainage, septic tanks or any surface drainage leading into them,

Is located where oil spilled from the Installation could reach any of the above by running across hard ground,

If the vent pipe is not visible from the filling point of the tank e.g. extended or offset fill pipe.

Or if there is any other potential hazard individual to the site.

If ANY of the above applies, the Installer must provide Secondary containment of the Oil storage tank by either utilizing a Pre-bunded tank, or a masonry catch pit. If a masonry catch pit is the preferred option, then it must be built to a Standard specified by British Standards and Building Regulations, obtainable from the Environmental Agency.

Most plastic oil tanks should be fitted with a solid non combustible base, although some tanks can be fitted on masonry pillars but only if in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Internal and underground Oil tank Installations have other factors to be considered and further information can be found in Building Regulations Approved Document J, BS 5410 Part 1 and 2 as well as OFTEC Technical book 3.

Although any domestic oil appliance or domestic oil tank of 2500 litres or less, installed prior to 1st April 2002 are not governed by these regulations, and therefore the owner cannot be forced to bring their Installations in line with the current regulations, until they move or replace the Oil tank or Oil appliance; it is strongly recommended that they check with their insurance companies as there may be a clause to void any insurance if the system is not compliant.

This factsheet is designed only to give a basic guide to the legality of installations both before and after the introduction of Building Regulations Approved Document J 2002, it should only be used as a guide, for full details please see the Building Regulations Approved Document J 2002 and any amendments made to it.