



Your heating oil is valuable

Are you doing all you can to protect it?



Do you check your tank regularly?

If your oil leaks into the ground, local river, stream or lake it can be expensive. The lost oil can cost you hundreds of pounds, but the clean-up costs are regularly more than £20,000. If groundwater or drinking water is affected, these costs can quickly escalate to six figures, unless dealt with swiftly by specialists.

You will likely be without heating or hot water, and need to deal with significant damage to your home; not to mention the disruption to daily life whilst you sort it all out.

If you live above groundwater used for public water supply it is likely that some of your property will need to be dug up to find and remove the oil before it causes too much contamination. In the most serious cases, this can mean moving out of your home for a prolonged period whilst the works are underway.

All this is much more likely to happen if your tank is more than 20 years old, in poor condition, 'single skinned', or has deteriorating pipework.

Have you checked that your tank is reliable and safe, for you and your family?

Do you know what you are responsible for?

If you have an oil tank at home:

- your oil tank and fuel lines must comply with building regulations, or you will not be able to claim on insurance (if covered);
- you have a legal responsibility to make sure your oil doesn't cause pollution;
- you face liability to clean up in the event of a spill or leak that causes (or is likely to cause) environmental damage;
- you also face an unlimited fine and a criminal prosecution if your oil causes pollution of a river, stream, lake or groundwater.

TOP TIP

**Don't overfill your tank!
Check how much oil is
already in the tank before
you receive a delivery**



Are you eligible for a subsidised inspection or replacement tank?

Pat was concerned about the state of their old heating oil tank. Their property was above groundwater used for public water supply so Pat was entitled to a free tank inspection which found the oil set-up was indeed at risk of failing. Because of their location, Pat was also eligible for a 50% grant from Portsmouth Water towards a replacement tank and system.

Nearly a year on, the family now have a safe, new tank on an impermeable base. No more worries!

Are you eligible?

E-mail

catchment.management@portsmouthwater.co.uk

Call

07872 108992 or 023 9224 9248

3

easy steps

to protect your heating oil and home

1

Find out if your tank and pipes are safe at

www.oilcare.org.uk/look-after-your-oil/regular-tank-checks/ or watch <https://youtu.be/igk6JbKbV3M>.

2

Check your tank regularly and every time before you place an order to make sure it isn't damaged or leaking, and get a competent person to check it annually, preferably at the same time as your annual boiler service. You can find a registered oil technician at www.oftec.org.uk/Consumers/FindTechnician.

3

Check your home insurance. Ask your insurer what cover you actually have for cleaning up an oil spill or leak. You need to be covered for a 'gradual environmental spill' not just 'sudden, accidental loss'. Search for an insurance policy that covers you properly if your insurer doesn't.

Would you be covered?

Sam was a working parent and didn't have time to think about the heating oil. Sadly in the run up to Christmas, Sam woke up one morning to a cold house and a strong smell of oil in the kitchen. After a disastrous Christmas which involved temporarily moving out of the family home, investigations found that about 1000 litres of oil had escaped from the recently filled tank through a hole in the underground pipe. The oil soaked into the kitchen and a large portion of the family garden. The kitchen and garden had to be excavated and over 5 tonnes of contaminated soil had to be removed to prevent the leaked oil contaminating the local drinking water. Luckily for Sam, their insurer covered costs of more than £100,000.

If you discover a leak...

- Be safe (for example no smoking).
- If safe to do so collect dripping or leaking oil in a suitable container.
- Stop the oil from entering drains or watercourses by containing it with sand or earth.
- Don't spread the oil by hosing it down. Don't add detergents.
- Call the Environment Agency incident hotline 24 hours a day 0800 80 70 60.

TOP TIP

Check your tanks and pipes for leaks or spills after each delivery!

Visit www.portsmouthwater.co.uk/about-us/water-quality/heating-oil/ to find out more about your oil tank and take part in our survey to win an iPad (deadline applies).

