CONTENT <300 words>

**Your heating oil is valuable. Are you doing all you can to protect it?**

The Environment Agency, Portsmouth Water and OFTEC are encouraging people in parts of Hampshire and West Sussex to check and replace failing domestic heating oil tanks.

As an incentive, Portsmouth Water are offering a FREE inspection and 50% grant towards a replacement tank.

Dawn O’Neill, Environment Agency Groundwater Technical Specialist, is part of the campaign:

‘Oil pollution is one of the most common incidents I deal with. Over the last 3 years the Environment Agency recorded 395 pollution incidents in England caused by leaking or spilt heating oilfrom people’s homes. These can have a major impact on our rivers and streams, harming fish, birds and aquatic life’.

‘Heating oil leaks can be expensive for the householder – who are often not covered by their insurance. If the oil enters the ground or a local river, stream or lake, clean-up costs are regularly more than £20,000. If groundwater or drinking water is affected, these costs can quickly escalate to six figures, and involve some of their property being dug up to find and remove the oil before it causes too much pollution’.

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.

**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 competent person oil technician at [Competent Persons Register | Home](https://www.competentperson.co.uk/).
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.

Find out more about the local grant scheme, including a downloadable leaflet, at [www.portsmouthwater.co.uk/about-us/water-quality/heating-oil/](http://www.portsmouthwater.co.uk/about-us/water-quality/heating-oil/).

Contact Portsmouth Water to find out if you are eligible:

E-mail [catchment.management@portsmouthwater.co.uk](mailto:catchment.management@portsmouthwater.co.uk)

Call 07872 108992

**Always report an oil spill or leak to the Environment Agency’s 24-hour emergency hotline on 0800 80 70 60**

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