

The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010



The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 came into force on 20th March 2011. Enforced by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, these Regulations were introduced in Northern Ireland to promote better oil storage and to minimise the risks of oil being lost to the environment. Non compliance with these Regulations is an offence and may result in enforcement action being taken against the property owner.

These Regulations apply to both new and existing installations and are to be phased in over a 4 year period, as follows:

- New oil storage tanks in operation on or after 20th March 2011 are required to comply by 20th September 2011;
- Existing oil storage tanks that are located within 10 metres of any waterway or 50 metres of any well, spring or borehole are required to comply retrospectively by 20th March 2013;
- Remaining existing oil storage tanks are required to comply retrospectively by 31st December 2015.

The scope of these Regulations includes:

- Above ground non-domestic oil storage tanks where the oil storage is in excess of 200 litres capacity, such as those serving commercial and/or industrial premises, schools, churches, village halls, hospitals, etc.; and
- Above ground tanks serving single family dwellings where oil storage is in excess of 3500 litres capacity;
- Portable containers (drums, intermediate bulk containers (IBC's) and mobile bowsers etc) as well as fixed storage within buildings.

The scope of these regulations does not extend to:

- A container storing oil with a capacity of less than 200 litres;
- Oil storage tanks below 3500 litres capacity that serve single family dwellings for heating and/or cooking;
- Tanks installed wholly underground;
- Tanks containing agricultural fuel oil; and



- Tanks which are located on premises regulated under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 if the storage capacity of the container in which it is stored is 2,500 tonnes or more.

NOTE: These requirements differ to those of The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 and The Water Environment (Oil Storage) (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Information on these regulations are summarised on other OFTEC Information Sheets.



Secondary Containment

All oil storage tanks within scope of The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 are to be provided with a secondary containment system, commonly known as a “bund”.

Secondary containment can be provided by using a tank of the integrally bunded type which has an OFCERT™ Licence to OFS T100, if constructed of plastic, or OFS T200, if constructed of steel. An integrally bunded tank consists of a primary tank, which contains the oil. The primary tank is then surrounded by an outer bund area capable of containing at least 110% of the volume of the primary tanks capacity. Ancillary equipment will also be contained within the bund, so that any discharges of oil are contained.

An alternative method of providing secondary containment would be to construct a concrete or masonry bund compliant with CIRIA Report 163 (Construction of Bunds for Oil Storage Tanks). Constructed bunds must be capable of containing at least 110% of the volume of the primary tank or where there is more than one tank contained within a constructed bund area, the bund must be capable of containing a minimum volume of either 110% of the capacity of the largest tank or 25% of the total volume of oil which could be stored at any one time, whichever is the greater.

The base and walls of the bund must not be penetrated by any valves, pipes or other openings which could be used for draining the bund. If a fill pipe or draw-off pipe has to penetrate the base or wall of the bund, this section of pipe must be adequately sealed to prevent oil escaping from the bund (steel fabricated puddle flanges are recommended for this use).

Where an existing tank is being replaced with a new tank, the replacement new tank installation should also comply with the requirements of BS 5410: Part 2.

Ancillary equipment

These are fittings associated with the tank type, its location and use. Ancillary equipment such as valves, filters, sight gauges, vent pipes or similar equipment must be located within a bund area. An isolating valve or filter installed in a pipe run from an integrally bunded tank is not classed as being ancillary to the tank and are therefore permitted to be installed outside of the bund.

Traditional sight tube contents gauges must not be used on integrally bunded oil storage tanks. Hydrostatic or electronic contents gauges are most suitable for this application. Where traditional sight tubes are fitted to tanks located within a constructed bund, the sight gauge must be properly supported and incorporate a spring-loaded isolating valve which returns to the off position when not in use.

Any permanent vent pipe, drain tap or valve fitted to the tank must be situated within the bund and be able to discharge oil vertically downwards into the bund. Any tap or valve must be locked shut when not in use.



Fittings for fuel delivery

Oil storage tanks covered by these Regulations must be fitted with an automatic overfill prevention device if the filling operation is controlled from a place where it is not reasonably practicable to see the tank or any vent pipe. These can be electronic or mechanical and either sound an alarm and/or give a visual warning

whilst automatically stopping the delivery of oil into the tank. Oil storage tanks which have an OFCERT™ Licence to OFS T100 or OFS T200 are supplied with this feature as standard. It is also recommended that an overfill alarm is provided.

The tank must be filled via a screwed fitting or other fixed coupling which is in good condition. If the fill point is external to the bund a drip tray must be provided to catch any oil that could be lost during the coupling and decoupling of the delivery hose.

Where oil is supplied from a tank through a permanently connected delivery/dispensing pipe, the pipe must be fitted with an automatic closing tap or valve at the delivery end which cannot be fixed in an open position. The pipe must be secured in a cabinet incorporating a drip tray when not in use. Alternatively, the delivery/dispensing pipe can be fitted with a lockable valve where it leaves the tank and must be kept within the bund when it is not in use.



Underground Pipework

Underground pipework serving an installation covered by The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 must be protected from physical damage. Pipework must either incorporate a facility for leak detection which complies with EC leak detection standard EN 13160-1 to 7, or the pipe must be pressure tested upon erection and once again every ten years if there are no joints or every five years if there are joints. Records of all tests are required. Underground pipework should preferably contain no joints. However, where this is unavoidable, joints must be provided with a permanent means of access to allow for inspection and maintenance.

Drums and mobile bowers

The capacity of a drip tray containing any drums must be equal to 25% of the capacity of the drums

stored within it. For mobile bowers, any tap or valve permanently fixed to the unit through which oil can be discharged to the open must be locked shut when not in use. Where oil is delivered through a flexible pipe which is permanently attached to the unit, the pipe must be fitted with a manually operated pump or with a valve at the delivery end which closes automatically when not in use. When the pipe or valve is not in use they must be locked shut and in the case of the pipe, be fitted with a lockable valve where it leaves the container.



Inspection and maintenance

Steel oil storage tanks, when properly installed, may require infrequent maintenance during their useful life. However, they should be regularly inspected for any signs of corrosion or leakage.

Plastic oil storage tanks usually require little maintenance. However, it is important that they are also inspected for any signs of leakage, discolouration and deformation.

It is recommended that oil storage tanks and their ancillary equipment are inspected on an annual basis by an OFTEC Registered Technician.

Finding an OFTEC Registered Technician

The OFTEC website enables you to locate your nearest Registered Technicians. OFTEC Registered Technicians are appropriately qualified and insured to work on oil fired equipment.

You can also find a list of local Registered Technicians under the OFTEC logo in the 'Heating Engineers' section of your local pages.

For further information on oil heating and cooking, please see www.oftec.org





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For more information on this subject or for further information sheets:

t: 0845 65 85 080 f: 0845 65 85 181 e: enquiries@oftec.org w: www.oftec.org
OFTEC Foxwood House, Dobbs Lane, Kesgrave, Ipswich IP5 2QQ

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