

10. Which heating oil storage regulations apply to me?

Everyone storing oil in a container with a capacity of over 200 litres must follow oil storage regulations. The regulations you are required to follow depends upon the usage of the tank and its location – both the proximity of the tank in relation to other structures and the country in which the tank resides. Read on to find out which regulations apply to you.

DOMESTIC OIL STORAGE REGULATIONS

The England control of pollution (oil storage) regulations (2001) state that an oil tank is considered domestic if it has a capacity of 3,500 litres or under and it's used to heat a domestic building – e.g. the primary use can't be for commercial purposes. Domestic oil tanks with a capacity under 3,501 litres aren't required to have a bund if it's sited in any of the following places:

- Where oil spills could run over hard ground and reach coastal waters, inland fresh waters or a drinking water source.
- Where oil spills could run into an open drain or a loose manhole cover.
- Where the tank vent pipes cannot be seen when the tank's being filled, for example, because the delivery tanker is parked too far away.
- Within 10 metres of coastal waters or inland fresh waters like lakes or streams.
- Within 50 metres of a drinking water source, for example, wells, boreholes or springs.
- In the inner zone of [groundwater source protection zone 1](#)

While in these circumstances a bund isn't compulsory, we still recommend bunding all tanks as it's good environmental practice. Additionally, when you install a single skin tank you face the risk of regulation updates making your tank no longer compliant.

COMMERCIAL OIL STORAGE REGULATIONS

Commercial oil storage regulations must be followed if your business (including marinas and public sector premises) stores oil in a tank with a capacity of 201 litres or higher, or if your domestic premises stores oil in a tank with a capacity over 3,500 litres.

If your oil tank falls into this category then your tank must contain a secondary containment to reduce the risk of spillages. This secondary containment usually takes the form of a bund – an outer layer capable of holding at least 110% of the inner tank's capacity. This bund can be constructed from masonry or concrete, or can be 'integrally bundled'.

[Tuffa's oil tanks](#) are integrally bundled meaning that the bund is fitted during the manufacturing process.

WALES, SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

With an increased focus on protecting the environment oil storage regulations are becoming increasingly strict and regulations in Wales now require all new oil tank installations with a capacity over 200 litres to be bunded. In Scotland all oil tanks with a capacity above 2,500 litres must be bunded. Tanks in Northern Ireland follow the same secondary containment requirements as England and must be bunded when above 3,500 litres in capacity.

To find out more about oil storage regulations in your country click on the appropriate link:

[England – Control of pollution \(oil storage\) regulations 2001](#)

[Wales – Control of pollution \(oil storage\) regulations 2016](#)

[Scotland – The Water Environment \(Controlled Activities\) Regulations 2011](#)

[Northern Ireland – Control of pollution \(oil storage\) regulations 2010](#)

BUILDING REGULATIONS – FIRE SEPARATION DISTANCES

As well as oil storage regulations, heating oil tanks which are connected to a furnace or boiler must also comply with building regulations. These regulations state fire separation distances – minimum distances that your heating oil tank must be from boundaries and structures. These regulations are in place to reduce the risk of fires igniting the kerosene. Under these regulations your tank cannot be located:

1. Within 1.8m of a non-fire rated building or structure.
2. Within 760mm of a non-fire rated boundary.
3. Within 1.8m of non-fire rated eaves.
4. Within close proximity to a balanced flue.

In addition, the tank must be sited on a hard base such as concrete or paving slabs at least 42mm thick. The base must also extend for a minimum of 300mm around all sides of the tank.