

Support from the Environment Agency

Who are we?

The Environment Agency is a non Departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and charged with safeguarding and improving the environment for present and future generations.

What do we do?

We regulate many activities that have an impact on the environment, including those that have the potential to cause pollution of air, land and water. With respect to the water environment, we regulate the abstraction and storage of water, salmon and freshwater fisheries and the use of certain river navigations. In addition we have responsibilities for the provision of flood defence and the promotion of recreational activities.

Although the Agency has strong enforcement powers, we firmly believe that prevention is better than cure. Our aim is to make everyone aware of the risks to our rivers and groundwaters and of the steps that can be taken to prevent pollution. Our staff regularly visit a range of premises to see what pollution prevention measures are in place and to advise owners and managers if anything further is required.

All air pollution, water pollution and uncontrolled waste disposal is a criminal offence, and polluters can be prosecuted. The Environment Agency is available to give help and advice at any time.

Get in touch with us and take action before it is too late.

Further information

The Agency publishes a range of pollution prevention materials, including a series of Pollution Prevention Guidance notes, of which:

PPG 2 Above ground oil storage
and

PPG26 Storage and handling of drums and Intermediate Bulk Containers

are of particular relevance.

The Agency is also a partner in the Oil Care Campaign, which aims to reduce oil pollution from all sources, and produces leaflets on the subject, including the Oil Care Code. More information is available from www.environment-agency.gov.uk/oilcare

To obtain a full list of available materials or individual copies, contact the Agency on 0845 933 3111.

If you require further details, DEFRA have produced a guidance note on the regulations:

Guidance note for the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001

This is available from: www.defra.gov.uk/

The Regulations are available from The Stationery Office, telephone 08706 005522.



CONTACTS:

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY HEAD OFFICE

Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4UD.
Tel: 01454 624 400 Fax: 01454 624 409

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

www.environment-agency.wales.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REGIONAL OFFICES

ANGLIAN

Kingfisher House
Goldhay Way
Orton Goldhay
Peterborough PE2 5ZR
Tel: 01733 371 811
Fax: 01733 231 840

MIDLANDS

Sapphire East
550 Streetsbrook Road
Solihull B91 1QT
Tel: 0121 711 2324
Fax: 0121 711 5824

NORTH EAST

Rivers House
21 Park Square South
Leeds LS1 2QG
Tel: 0113 244 0191
Fax: 0113 246 1889

NORTH WEST

Richard Fairclough House
Knuttsford Road
Warrington WA4 1HG
Tel: 01925 653 999
Fax: 01925 415 961

SOUTHERN

Guildbourne House
Chatsworth Road
Worthing
West Sussex BN11 1LD
Tel: 01903 832 000
Fax: 01903 821 832

SOUTH WEST

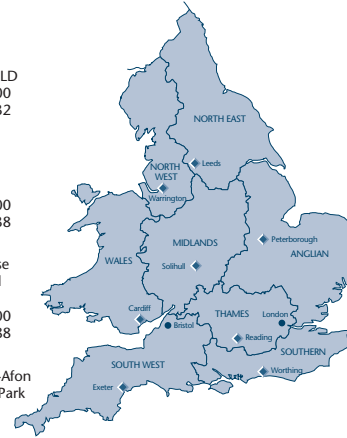
Manley House
Kestrel Way
Exeter EX2 7LQ
Tel: 01392 444 000
Fax: 01392 444 238

THAMES

Kings Meadow House
Kings Meadow Road
Reading RG1 8DQ
Tel: 0118 953 5000
Fax: 0118 950 0388

WALES

Rivers House/Plas-yr-Afon
St Mellons Business Park
St Mellons
Cardiff CF3 0EY
Tel: 029 2077 0088
Fax: 029 2079 8555



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY GENERAL ENQUIRY LINE

0845 9 333 111

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY FLOODLINE

0845 988 1188

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY EMERGENCY HOTLINE

0800 80 70 60



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Oil storage regulations



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Who do the oil storage regulations affect?

If you store more than 200 litres of oil above ground (in one or more containers) at an industrial, commercial or institutional site, then these regulations will affect you. They cover factories, shops, offices, hotels, schools, public sector buildings and hospitals. The regulations apply only in England.

Why do we need oil storage regulations?

In 2000 about a sixth of all pollution incidents affecting the environment involved oil. Most incidents were caused by oil leaking from tanks either during storage or delivery. The regulations will help us to stop these incidents by requiring tank owners to provide a secondary containment facility, such as a bund or drip tray, to prevent oil escaping into the water environment.

Oil is toxic to plants and animals and a small amount of oil can devastate river life by forming a thin film on the water surface which stops oxygen getting to plants and animals. Oil spilt on the ground can pollute underground waters making them unfit for use as well as being very expensive to put right.

Which types of oil are covered?

All types of oil, with the exception of waste oil, are covered by these regulations, including petrol, diesel, vegetable, synthetic and mineral oil. Waste oil storage is covered by the Waste Management Licensing Regulations. It is important to note that in the case of flammable liquids, such as petrol, additional health and safety requirements may also apply.

What are the standards?

Tanks, drums or other containers must be strong enough to hold the oil without leaking or bursting.

If possible, the oil container must be positioned away from any vehicle traffic to avoid damage from collision.

A bund or drip tray must be provided to catch any oil leaks from the container or its ancillary pipework and equipment.

The bund must be sufficient to contain 110% of the maximum contents of the oil container.

Where more than one container is stored, the bund should be capable of storing 110% of the largest tank or 25% of the total storage capacity, whichever is the greater.

The bund base and walls must be impermeable to water and oil and checked regularly for leaks.

Any valve, filter, sight gauge, vent pipe or other ancillary equipment must be kept within the bund when not in use.

No drainage valve may be fitted to the bund for the purpose of draining out rainwater.

Above-ground pipework should be properly supported.

Underground pipework should be protected from physical damage and have adequate leakage detection. If mechanical joints must be used, they should be readily accessible for inspection.

A number of other detailed requirements are included in the regulations, such as the positioning of sight gauges, fill points, vent pipes and other ancillary equipment.

Do you need further advice?

The Environment Agency publishes Pollution Prevention Guidance notes on oil storage, PPG2 and PPG26, that provide practical advice, which, if followed, will ensure compliance with the regulations. See Further Information.

When do the regulations come into effect?

New oil stores will have to comply from 1st March 2002.

Existing oil stores "at significant risk" will have to comply within two years, that is from 1st September 2003.

All remaining existing oil stores must comply within four years, that is from 1st September 2005.

In general, an oil store will be considered to be at "significant risk" if it is located within 10 metres of a watercourse or 50 metres of a well or borehole.

Are mobile containers covered?

Yes. The regulations apply to drums greater than 200 litres and to mobile bowers. Many self-bunded bowers are now available. Those that are not bunded will need to be kept in a bunded area or a drip tray when in use. For single drums, a drip tray with a capacity of 25% is acceptable.

How are the regulations enforced?

The Environment Agency is responsible for enforcing these regulations throughout England. Should your oil storage facilities be inadequate, the Agency will provide advice and guidance to assist you with compliance. However, if you fail to act, the Agency may serve a notice requiring that the facilities be brought up to standard. Failure to comply with a notice is a criminal offence and may result in prosecution.

The regulations do not apply to:

- waste oil;
- premises used wholly or mainly as a single private dwelling where less than 3500 litres are stored;
- premises used for refining oil or its onward distribution;
- any oil stored in a building or wholly underground;
- farms - the storage of agricultural fuel oil on farms is subject to the Control of Pollution, Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil Regulations 1991, which set comparable standards.

About this leaflet

This leaflet is published jointly by the Environment Agency and DEFRA. It describes the key points of "The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001".

The regulations set out the requirements to be met for the safe storage of oil in containers above ground. This leaflet does not cover all the details of the regulations. You should refer to the regulations themselves to obtain full information – see Further Information.



Mobile bowers are covered by the regulations

Poor oil storage is a serious risk to the environment

Bunded oil tank

Showing arrangements for both fixed and flexible draw off points

