



Top-tips for winter

We've compiled our best advice for managing your winter heating oil, and preparing your boiler & storage tank for the colder weather

Winter Pricing



Boiler Servicing



When To Buy



Financial Help



Top-tips to help you manage your winter oil safely

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7 Common Mistakes of Winter Heating Oil Management



Below are the 7 most common reasons for accidentally running dry of heating oil or requiring an emergency call out by one of our OFTEC boiler engineers.

1) Failing to monitor the level of heating oil in your storage tank

Not knowing how much heating oil is in your storage tank is one of the biggest reasons for running dry and requiring an urgent delivery. Monitoring oil levels is important throughout the year but especially during the winter, when delivery schedules will be at their busiest. Regularly checking your oil level is important if you are part of a top-up scheme too, as unexpected changes to the weather or your household could mean you are using more or less heating oil than anticipated.

It is advisable not to let the level of heating oil in your storage tank fall below 12 inches from the bottom. We recommend placing an order for heating oil when you reach the final $\frac{1}{4}$ of your tank, as this should allow sufficient time for a delivery to be made to you during the busy winter months. It is good practice to check your oil level once a week during Autumn and Winter.

2) Not getting your oil or gas boiler serviced yearly

During the cold weather in winter and autumn your boiler will be working its hardest, failing to ensure it is working safely and efficiently before the winter weather starts could mean you are left without heating and hot water when you'll rely on it the most.

It is recommended that you service your oil or gas boiler at least once every 12 months. An annual service reduces the chances of an unexpected breakdown and will detect any problems before they lead to a complete failure of the boiler. Autumn and winter are the busiest times for our boiler Engineers, it is essential that you plan ahead and book your service in plenty of time. If you have a maintenance contract with Gleaner, a member of our team will contact you to arrange your annual service when it is due.

3) Ordering winter heating oil at the last minute

Delivery schedules will be at their busiest between October and December with a rush expected leading up to

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7 Common Mistakes of Winter Heating Oil Management

Christmas and New Year period. Not placing your winter heating oil order in plenty of time could mean that you miss the window for delivery before the festive period.

Delivery times are expected to increase during the winter months to cope with the increase in heating oil orders, therefore we always encourage customers to take a fill of their tank as early as possible so long as they can afford to do so. The earlier you order your winter heating oil the more likely you are to pay a cheaper price as demand is likely to be at its highest between October – December. Thinking ahead to your winter heating oil needs during autumn will also mean you are prepared should the bad weather start earlier than anticipated, meaning you are less likely to run dry.

4) Not considering delivery access in bad weather

A sudden onset of heavy snow or icy weather can affect the ability of our drivers to make a delivery to you, particularly if you live in a rural location. It pays to be mindful of the changing weather when considering when to place your winter heating oil order. Ordering before the start of the bad weather and ensuring you have plenty of oil to see you through until a delivery can be made in bad weather, would always be advisable.

Although our experienced drivers and operations teams endeavour to make timely deliveries to customers, particularly those running low on oil, safety is always our number one priority. With our 6-wheel tankers weighing up to 26 tonnes, our drivers could deem a delivery too dangerous to undertake in adverse weather. If you are expecting a delivery our advice would be to keep access points as clear as possible, and your delivery depot update

with the current conditions.

5) Not considering how your oil consumption will change over the festive period

The Christmas and New Year period is a time to get together with friends and family to celebrate, however changes to your household, such as additional guests, could mean that you are using more heating oil to heat your home than you had anticipated.

It is important to plan ahead and ensure that you have enough heating oil in your storage tank to see you through the festive period when our delivery depots will be closed. Regular monitoring of your oil level and remembering to order in plenty of time to allow for a delivery during our busy period, will reduce your chances of running dry.

6) Failing to ensure your oil storage tank is safe for use

The health and condition of your fuel storage tank can often be overlooked when it comes preparing for the winter months. A well maintained tank will be less likely to suffer an accidental spill and should remain usable for between 10-15 years.

It is good practice to inspect your oil storage tank at least once a month and have an OFTEC engineer look at it annually usually at the same time as your boiler service. Look for any signs of change or damage to the tank such as cracks, splits, bulges, whitening or vegetation die-back. Should you require a boiler service or

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tank inspection contact our boiler maintenance department on 01343 557 435.

You should also consider what protection your outdoor plastic oil storage tank will require. Strong winds, broken or low-hanging branches all have the potential to cause damage to the tank which may lead to a spill of the oil contents. During the winter weather you should also be vigilant for falling snow and icicles. Should you notice any of these dangers they should be rectified quickly to prevent damage to your oil tank..

7) Forgetting to budget for your winter heating oil

The final common mistake made by many heating oil users is forgetting to budget for their increased oil usage during the colder months. The winter season can be expensive with the lead up to Christmas, an unexpected oil bill would be unwelcome and could in some instances cause financial strain.

Thinking ahead to your winter oil needs in the autumn or earlier in the year would mean that you have time to budget for your increased oil consumption during the colder weather. Joining a budget payment plan or setting up a monthly direct debit would help to prevent an unexpected oil bill.

If you think you might struggle to pay for your winter heating oil order, we recommend talking to our finance department who would be able to discuss the options available to you.

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Winter heating oil prices -when to order to get the best price



As a user of Kerosene heating oil to heat your home you will be aware of the price fluctuations, often having to pay a different price for each order you place. It can therefore be difficult to know when the best time is to place an order to get the best value or cheapest price, particularly in the lead up to the colder winter months when you'll use the most oil. On average, between October and March a household will use 2/3rds of its yearly heating oil consumption.

As there are many complex factors which influence the price you pay for your heating oil, this makes it difficult to predict when the best time to purchase oil is. By understanding some of the main factors affecting the price of winter heating oil you should be able to make an informed decision about when the best time to order is for you. However, we always recommend you start to think about your winter heating oil requirements during the autumn. This means you'll be prepared should the colder weather start earlier than anticipated, plus you would beat the rush for deliveries leading up to the Christmas and New Year period.

What factors influence the price of winter heating oil:

During the winter months when the weather is at its coldest, it would be anticipated that a household would use more heating oil to keep warm than during the warmer summer months. This means that the demand for heating oil is likely to increase significantly during the seasonal weather. An increase in demand is likely to result in a rise in price as more Kerosene will need be needed to cope with the higher demand.

Weather changes will also heavily influence the price of heating oil. A particularly cold winter or an unexpected spell of bad weather, where households are using more oil for heat, could result in a sharp price increase. Likewise a mild winter could see households turning down the thermostat and therefore using less oil, which might result in a fall in oil prices as demand is not as high as anticipated, leaving manufacturers with surplus oil. You are likely to find that because demand for heating oil is lower in the warmer summer months the price you'll pay will also be cheaper.

Keeping an eye on the upcoming

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Winter heating oil prices -when to order to get the best price

weather could provide an indication as to what the price of heating oil is likely to do. The earlier you order your winter oil the more likely you are to pay a cheaper price as demand is anticipated to be at its highest between October to December.

It is advisable to be aware of global factors which may also have a bearing on the price you will pay for your winter heating oil. Crude oil which forms the basis of Kerosene heating oil is bought and traded in US Dollars. The Pound Sterling to US Dollar exchange rate will also have an impact on the price you pay for heating oil. As will the availability of oil from producers. Oil producers around the world will try and anticipate the quantity of oil that will be required. If demand for heating oil is higher or lower than they have anticipated it could affect the price you pay. Other issues such as global political, weather and economical events may also play a role in influencing the price of your heating oil this winter.

When is the best time to buy heating oil to get the best price this winter:

Monitoring these influencing factors may help you to predict whether the market prices are likely to rise or fall, and may help you to decide when would be the best time for you to fill your heating oil storage tank ahead of the colder weather starting. However, our advice would always be to take a fill of your tank as early as possible so long as you can afford to do so.

Monitor your heating oil levels to avoid running dry over winter:

Regularly monitor your heating oil levels as this will help you to identify when you need to place an order and will help to reduce your chances of

unexpectedly running dry during the cold weather when you'll be most reliant on your household heating. If you require a top-up of your heating oil never hold out for the market to fall or for a better price. This could leave you at risk of running dry of oil, which may result in an emergency call out from an OFTEC engineer to get your boiler started again.

Be aware that your winter heating oil consumption may change during the festive period. Additional house guests or a sudden change in weather may mean that you are using more heating oil than you have anticipated

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What time of year should I service my boiler?



Your heating system, boiler and storage tank are an important part of your winter preparations. Every year, on average a fifth of UK homes are left in the cold after a boiler breakdown, 5% of these will be left with a bill of more than £1,250. Most of these breakdowns are caused by small preventable things that would cost little to repair.

Why do I need to service my boiler?

An annual boiler service is an important part of home ownership, ensuring you get the best from your heating systems. An efficient heating system helps to reduce running costs and unnecessarily high energy bills over the colder months. Making sure your central heating is working at peak efficiency means you get a warmer home per unit of energy you're paying for.

Regular boiler servicing can catch minor issues before they become expensive, and potentially dangerous problems to fix further down the line. Both oil and gas boilers have the potential to emit carbon monoxide (CO). An estimated 4,000 people a year end up in hospital due to CO poisoning. An annual service would reduce the chances of this happening, as any

potential faults would be identified.

Failing to have an annual boiler service may even invalidate your insurance. Many insurance policies will require you to have an annual boiler service to validate any claims you may make. It's worth noting, if you are a landlord, you are legally required to have a qualified Gas Safe or OFTEC engineer carry out an annual gas safety inspection on any rental properties you may have. As a Gas Safe and OFTEC registered company, our accredited engineers are fully trained to diagnose and repair oil fired and gas heating systems in compliance with current regulations.

When should I get my boiler serviced?

We recommend that boilers are serviced at least every 12 months to ensure they are working safely and efficiently. Planning ahead and keeping up-to-date with maintenance and servicing could help prevent an unexpected breakdown during the cold weather, when you'll need your heating the most.

Winter is the busiest time for our

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What time of year should I service my boiler?

engineers dealing with breakdowns, you may find you have to wait longer for a service appointment. Emergency callout times may be affected by the rise in demand also. Your boiler may also be suffering from the extra strain during the colder periods, especially if it hasn't been checked over by an engineer, potentially leaving you in the cold in the event of a boiler breakdown.

We recommend that summer/ early autumn is the best time to get your boiler serviced. Booking a service before your energy requirements start increasing for winter, will reduce the chance of a boiler breakdown when your home needs heating the most. Engineers are likely to be quieter during the summer and early autumn, which could make it easier to get a quicker appointment, at a time that suits you. During the service, our engineers will check your boiler for signs of leaks or corrosion. They will also check that each component is working in sound condition, detecting developing problems before they worsen, making sure your heating system is functioning effectively and safely.

How do I arrange an annual boiler service?

Our annual maintenance contracts and on-demand service keep your heating system safely operating all year round. Our engineers are based across Scotland, and are dedicated to providing our customers with a personal, local service.

Our maintenance contracts are managed by our boiler maintenance team, who take the hassle out of managing your boiler services by contacting you when you are due a service, to arrange an appointment to suit you. Taking

the hassle out of managing your boiler services. The on-demand service will still enable you to take use of our boiler service package and breakdown services.

To book your annual boiler service, or to find out more information, contact our boiler maintenance team on 01343 557 435.

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Financial help to make your winter heating oil affordable



It is expected that over the colder winter months household heating oil consumption will increase. The additional expense which comes with an increase in oil usage can put a strain on finances, particularly in the lead up to the festive Christmas period. With that in mind Gleaner would always recommend thinking ahead to your winter oil needs in the Autumn; ensuring you have time to budget for the extra cost and are prepared to order before the busy period.

If you do find that you are facing financial difficulties, which may affect your ability to cover the costs of your winter heating oil, you may be entitled to financial help. In the first instance we would ask you to contact our finance department who will be able to talk you through what options are available to you. In addition to this, there are many government and local authority schemes aimed at helping with the cost of large winter heating fuel bills. It may also be useful to talk to your local Citizens Advice Bureau who would be able to point you in the direction of charities which may be able to provide financial assistance.

How to pay for you winter heating oil:

Gleaner offer a wide range of payment options, which should meet the needs of most of our winter heating oil customers.

Our most popular method of payment is the Budget Payment Plan. It is suitable for heating oil customers who wish to pay a set amount on a monthly basis, this is a good way to spread the cost of your fuel throughout the year. The monthly amount is paid by direct debit and is based on your annual usage.

We also offer payment of the full amount of your invoice by direct debit, BACs, credit/debit card over the phone or online, or by cheque. We do ask for payment by the 10th of the month following your oil delivery, unless you have chosen our Budget Payment Plan.

More information on our payment methods can be found on our website.

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Financial help to make your winter heating oil affordable

Financial initiatives to help with winter heating oil bills:

We would never want to see any of our customers left without heating or hot water, particularly during the cold weather. Our finance team will be able to provide advice on the financial options available to you, and you may find that you are eligible for one of the schemes below to help you finance your winter home heating oil.

Winter Fuel Payment:

The Winter Fuel Payment initiative is designed to alleviate the financial pressure of paying for household heating over the colder months. If you are eligible for the scheme, we would encourage you to claim it.

You may be eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment if you were born on or before 5th April 1954. There are different rates of payment depending on age, whether you are receiving pension credit or social security benefits, and whether you live in a care home. You could be entitled to between £100 - £300, towards the cost of your winter heating oil.

Winter Fuel Payments are usually automatically paid along with social security benefits, however if you are not receiving those or if you have not received a payment before, you will need to make a claim by phone.

[Age UK](#) and [Shelter Scotland](#) both provide more information on Winter Fuel Payments. To find out if you are eligible and how to claim [visit the Government website](#).

Cold Weather Payments:

Cold Weather Payments can also provide a small financial boost to those who are eligible. Should the temperature in your area be recorded as zero Degrees Celsius or below for seven days in a row, and you are claiming social security benefits, job-seekers allowance, income support, support for mortgage interest, universal credit or pension credit, you maybe be eligible. Cold Weather Payments are paid automatically by the Department for Work and Pensions and are usually made within 14 days of the qualifying weather period.

You can check whether your area is forecast to receive a Cold Weather Payment by visiting: coldweatherpayments.dwp.gov.uk and entering your postcode.

Additional Government funding schemes:

If you find yourself in a crisis or emergency situation, or are in a low-income household, there are other financial schemes which you may be able to utilise to help pay for your winter heating oil. Although these schemes aren't designed to help specifically with household heating costs they can be used for this.

Crisis Grant through the Scottish Welfare Fund:

A Crisis Grant may be awarded to cover expenses which have arisen as a result of an emergency situation, should you not have access to any other method of funding.

You could be eligible for a variety

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Financial help to make your winter heating oil affordable

of reasons such as a gap in regular income. To qualify you must be over 16, on a low income and have proof that you don't have the money to pay for your short term needs.

Applications for a Crisis Grant must be made to your local council, this can be done online. More information can be found [here](#).

Budgeting Loan through the Social Fund:

Offered through the Government Social Fund, a Budgeting Loan is an interest free loan to help spread the costs of essential items over a manageable period.

To qualify you must have been receiving: income support, jobseekers allowance, employment and support allowance or pension credit for at least 6 months. The minimum loan amount is £100, and must be re-paid in full within 2 years.

Applications for [Budgeting Loans](#) can be made online or through the Jobcentre Plus.

Local Council community care grant:

Community Care Grants are awarded in exceptional circumstances to help with the costs of staying-in or setting up a home. They could be awarded to help safeguard children, to those moving on from care or to help people live independently. To qualify you must be over 16, on a low-income or claiming benefits or universal credit.

You must apply for a Community Care Grant through your local Authority, more information can be found [here](#).

Gleaner Ltd's Finance Department may be contacted on 013434 557466 or on 0800 833 534 and following the menu options.

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What to do if you run out of heating oil this winter



Running dry of home heating oil is inconvenient at the best of times, even more so if it happens during the colder winter months when you are reliant on it to keep your household warm. You could accidentally run out of heating oil if you aren't regularly checking the level of heating oil in your storage tank. You could also run dry through no fault of your own, for instance if you suffer a fuel theft, luckily though these are rare.

Steps to take should you run dry of heating oil:

So the worst has happened; your boiler won't start and you've no heating or hot water. In this situation, Gleaner recommends following the steps below.

1) Confirm you have run out of heating oil

It may seem obvious but it is always beneficial to confirm that you have run out of home heating oil by taking a manual dip of your fuel storage tank. In some instances it may be that a fault with the boiler or fuel lines from the storage tank are causing the problem. Confirming that you have run dry of heating oil will ensure you can get your household heating up and running again as quickly as possible, without further delays.

2) Place an order with your heating oil supplier as soon as possible

It is important that you place an order with your fuel supplier as soon as you can. The winter period and in particular the lead up to the festive Christmas and New Year time will be the busiest for oil deliveries. During this time it is expected that delivery lead times will increase. When you place your order you should ensure your supplier is aware that you are dry of heating oil so they can mark your order as urgent.

3) Consider purchasing a 20 litre drum of kerosene

Over the colder months you may be able to purchase 20 litres drums of Kerosene heating oil from your heating oil supplier. It may be the case that a drum (or a few drums) are enough to start your heating system again and get some warmth back in to your house, whilst you wait for a heating oil delivery from your supplier. You might also consider purchasing a 20 litres drum if you are waiting for a winter oil delivery and think you may run dry before this can be made.

20 litre drums are available to purchase from most (but not all) Gleaner depots. If you are interested

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What to do if you run out of heating oil this winter

in purchasing a drum we do recommend contacting your local delivery depot for availability and pricing.

4) Be mindful that you may require an engineer to re-start your boiler

In some cases the boiler may not restart once you have received a delivery of heating oil. Usually this is caused by clogged filters and fuel lines, rather than damage to the boiler. Most oil boilers are fitted with a safety mechanism which will turn off the burner to prevent damage in the event that there is no oil to combust. Before this can happen however the naturally occurring sludge and dirt in the bottom of the storage tank can be dragged into the fuel lines and filters. Should this happen you would require a call out by an OFTEC registered engineer to clean the lines and filters, and restart your boiler.

5) Consider if your heating oil monitoring routine is sufficient

If you have run dry of heating oil accidentally, it may be worthwhile putting in place a regular oil monitoring routine. It is always recommended that through the colder weather in Autumn and Winter, you check your heating oil level at least once a week. This is the best way to prevent running accidentally dry of heating oil. By knowing how much oil is left in you tank means you will know when to place an order, it is advisable not to let your tank fall below 12 inches from the bottom. To allow sufficient time for a delivery to made to you during the busy winter period you should place an order before your tank reaches the final $\frac{1}{4}$ of oil.

Installing an electronic oil monitoring gauge may make it easier to see the level of oil in your storage tank.

Watchman Sonic devices can be purchased from Gleaners Boiler Maintenance team and will be fully installed and set up by an OFTEC engineer.

6 Consider a top-up scheme with your supplier

Joining a top-up scheme with your supplier may also be a useful option to help you manage your oil supply, reducing the chances that you will accidentally run dry.

Gleaner's top-up scheduled delivery service, uses your previous order history to predict when you will be due a fill of your oil storage tank. Having pre-planned deliveries throughout the year, is one of the easiest way to ensure you receive a steady supply of heating oil.

Our top-up service is completely free for customers to join and use. Simply let us know that you wish to join and our team will organise setting everything up for you.

Once your are on the top-up service the frequency of your deliveries can easily be changed if you find you are using more or less oil than we have estimated.

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What to do in an oil emergency over the festive period



Suffering an emergency with your oil supply is luckily a rare occurrence that most of our customers won't have to experience. However should the worst case scenario happen, it pays to be aware of the process you should follow to ensure your safety and to prevent environmental pollution if possible.

Contact the Gleaner emergency line as soon as possible

Gleaner Ltd depots will be closed for 2 days for Christmas and another 2 days over the New Year period New Year periods. Should you suffer an oil emergency during this time, it is important to follow the usual procedure.

Gleaner has an emergency telephone line, which is monitored at all times (24 hours a day, 7 days a week including over the festive period and public holidays). As soon as you have become aware of an issue you should call **01343 543 535** and explain the situation. If it is deemed necessary a member of our team will be in touch to let you know what you should do next.

It is important to note that the emergency line should not be used if you have run dry or low of oil. In this instance you would need to contact your

local delivery depot once they have reopened.

Our boiler maintenance department also operate a breakdown service for oil and gas boilers, which covers the festive period as well as weekends and public holidays. The service is available between 8am – 5pm, should you require a call out phone the office on **01343 557 435** and leave a message on the answer machine. A member of the team will call you back as soon as we can.

How to deal with an oil spill

Dealing an oil spill leak quickly and efficiently could prevent or limit damaged caused to the environment or yourself.

Steps to take for an oil spill emergency

1) *Identify where the oil leak has come from*
This could be an obvious crack or split in the oil storage tank, or it could be damage caused to a valve or fuel supply line, which may be harder to identify.

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What to do in an oil emergency over the festive period

2) *Where possible reduce or stop the oil flow*

Cat litter, sand and earth can be used to absorb any oil which has spilled out of the storage tank and used to create a barrier to prevent the oil spill spreading further, causing more environmental pollution. It's important to remember to never use water or detergents to wash away spilt oil as this will cause the pollution to spread even further. A bar of soap can be used to help plug any small cracks on the oil storage tank as a temporary measure until it can be emptied of the oil contents.

3) *Make it known you have suffered an oil leak*

You should contact Gleaner on the emergency line number as soon as possible. You should also contact your local authority's environmental health department and provide details of the spill, particularly if the spilt oil is at risk of entering a water system. If necessary you may also need to make your insurance provider or landlord aware of the oil spill.

How to deal with a fire:

Both oil and LPG are highly flammable liquids and can therefore be a fire risk. In the case of a fire emergency firstly you should get yourself to safety and then call 999 immediately. Only if it is safe to do so, isolate the oil or gas at the tank. It's important to make the fire service aware of any hazards such as a domestic oil storage tank or LPG vessel, as these pose a high risk should they become compromised by the fire.

The dangers of carbon monoxide and the steps to take in an emergency:

Carbon monoxide can be produced by faulty appliances which are not

correctly or fully burning fuel as they should. It is particularly dangerous because it is tasteless and odourless meaning it cannot be detected by humans.

Carbon Monoxide poisoning could be fatal and must be taken seriously. It can cause tiredness, confusion, headaches, dizziness, nausea, sickness, shortness of breath and loss of coordination. Installing a carbon monoxide detector is the best way to protect yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning as it will alert you to any dangers.

Should you suspect a carbon monoxide leak it is important to act quickly and follow the steps below

- 1) Open windows and doors to let in as much fresh air as possible
- 2) Turn off all appliances which could be at fault for the leak
- 3) Contact an OFTEC or Gas Safe registered engineer to identify and fix the fault with your oil or gas boiler. Gleaner's engineers will be able to provide this service for you, and can be contacted on 01343 557 435.

If you do not have a carbon monoxide alarm, we would recommend installing one. These can be supplied and installed by our boiler maintenance engineers.

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Top-tips for maintaining your fuel storage tank



Your oil storage tank is an important part of your fuel system, especially if you rely on oil to fuel your business, or your household hot water and heating. Good maintenance will help your tank maximise its useful working life and ensure it remains safe for use.

A failure of your fuel oil storage tank leading to a spill of the oil content is very serious and could cause harm to the environment through contamination and pollution. As the household or business owner, it is your responsibility to ensure the oil storage tank and associated pipework are safe and fit for use.

The good news is there are some easy steps you can take to help look after your fuel storage tank. A well maintained tank will be less likely to suffer an accidental spill and should remain usable for between 10-15 years.

Step 1: Get to know your fuel oil storage tank

Being comfortable with how your oil system and storage tank works is important, particularly in an emergency situation such as an oil spill. It pays to spend time familiarising yourself with your oil storage tank and any

pipework or valves. Each oil tank and system will be different, therefore, whether you are new to oil and have little or maybe even no experience, or if you've recently moved house and have some previous experience, it is worthwhile spending time checking the following:

1.1 Do you know how the valves on the oil storage tank work?

If you suffer a leak in the pipework or valves leading from your oil tank, it is important that you know how to stop the oil flow using the isolation valve, to prevent further oil from spilling.

1.2 Do you know the capacity of your fuel storage tank?

The amount of oil a storage tank can hold can vary a lot depending on the make and model. Some slimline models designed for household heating oil could hold less than 1000 litres, or a fuel depot style storage tank designed for heavy commercial use could hold up to 9400 litres. The capacity of oil your storage tank can hold should be printed on the storage tank itself.

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Top-tips for maintaining your fuel storage tank

This information is useful to provide your oil supplier with, as this will help them estimate how much you might take if you order a fill of your tank. They can usually keep a note of this on your account, so you won't need to provide this information every time your order.

It is also important that you know how to operate the oil level monitoring gauge attached to the oil tank. This is usually a clear tube, which indicates the level of oil in the tank. We recommend that you do not allow the level of oil in the tank to fall below 12" from the bottom to prevent commonly-occurring sludge entering the pipework, which could lead to a boiler breakdown and would require a visit by an engineer to rectify.

1.3 Do you know the location of any hidden or underground pipework?

Identifying and knowing the location of any underground pipework associated with your oil storage tank is a good idea. Should any building or groundwork be required, knowing the location of the pipework will help to prevent any damage to the fuel lines which could cause an oil spill

After following the steps above and getting to know your fuel storage tank, it will then be easier to identify any small changes which could indicate that the tank is starting to develop a fault. The situation can then be monitored and if necessary measures to rectify can be taken before the issue leads to a serious open crack or split, or even an oil spill.

Step 2: Good maintenance practices to help look after your plastic oil storage tank

In general, if your oil storage tank remains in good condition it should last a long time and not require much in the way of ongoing maintenance. Below are our best practices to ensure your fuel oil storage tank is well maintained:

2.1 Inspect your fuel storage tank monthly

We recommend that you take time to inspect your fuel storage tank, associated pipework and surrounding area at least once a month. This inspection should look for any changes to the oil tank, such as cracks, splits, bulges or whitening. Signs of vegetation die back or wet patches surrounding the tank could be an indication that there is an oil leak and should be investigated by an OFTEC engineer.

2.2 Have an OFTEC engineer inspect your tank annually

In addition to monthly checks of your oil storage tank, we would recommend that an OFTEC registered engineer completes an inspection of your tank at least once a year. The engineer is fully trained to identify faults or potential dangers with your oil tank and may be able to pick up on something you have missed. Usually a tank inspection is carried out at the same time as an annual oil boiler service. Speak to our boiler service team today for more information on boiler servicing and tank inspections.

2.3 Ensure there is suitable protection for your outdoor tank

It is important to consider what protection your outdoor plastic oil storage tank will require. Dangers such as

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Identifying oil tank faults and signs of damage



Regardless of the age of your tank, we recommend carrying out a check at least once a month to monitor any signs of damage, but especially if your tank is 10 years of age or older. Damage can occur on your tank for a variety of reasons, such as cold weather or sun exposure. Although older tanks are more susceptible to faults, damage can affect your tank at any age, which is why regular checks are essential.

Our drivers will always complete a safety check of your oil tank before dispensing any fuel during a delivery. Should the driver notice any signs of damage, or have concerns about the condition or placement of your oil tank, they may decide that it would be unsafe to carry out the delivery. If this should happen, the driver will leave a note asking you to make contact with us as soon as possible. We can then arrange for one of our experienced boiler maintenance engineers to examine your tank, and if necessary guide you through the process of replacing your tank.

How to inspect your fuel tank for signs of damage:

An inspection of your fuel storage tank should include the base, surrounding area and any associated visible pipework. You should look for any changes

to the tank and surrounding area since the last check was carried out, as well as anything which could indicate a leak is likely to happen or has happened.

When inspecting your fuel storage tank it is important to include:

A check of the surrounding vegetation

Signs of die-back could indicate that there is a leak coming from the fuel tank. Allowing the surrounding vegetation to become overgrown could also make it more difficult to properly assess the condition of the tank and spot any potential danger



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Identifying oil tank faults and signs of damage

A check of the base and supports of the fuel storage tank for cracking and subsidence.



A check of all visible pipework, valves and filters.

Signs of dampness could indicate an oil leak. Other signs of damage could also be present, such as staining. Pay particular attention to joints and connection points.



A thorough check of the oil storage tank.

Be aware that the location of some tanks could mean that one or more of its sides are obscured from view, for instance if it was located too close to a wall or fence. This can make it more difficult to carry out a thorough inspection of the tank. On a plastic tank signs of damage could include: whitening, bulging, cracking, splits and deformation.



A check of tank bunds, if applicable.

Some tanks are situated within a physical bund. If this is the case for your tank, you should also include a check of this secondary containment facility. Be sure to remove any debris & rubbish.



Plastic oil storage tanks **cannot be repaired** once they have started to deteriorate, therefore noticing the signs of a fault developing is essential to prevent an accidental spill. We would advise getting a professional inspection of your tank from one of our boiler maintenance engineers should you notice any signs of deterioration or have any concerns.

Typical signs of damage on an oil storage tank:

It is common for fuel oil storage tank faults to begin to show on the outside of the tank. Visible signs of damage on the outside of your oil tank warrant speedy investigation and rectification.

To help you identify any signs of damage on your oil tank, we have named below some of the most common faults that occur:

Sun & UV exposure

Whitening and discolouration is a sign of surface bleaching of your plastic oil storage tank, which is caused by exposure to the UV light from the sun.

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Identifying oil tank faults and signs of damage

Plastic oil storage tanks will experience sun exposure in the summer, which causes the plastic to expand. Sun exposure can lead to deformities being created in the plastic such as bowing and twisting. In severe cases these deformities can progress into cracks, which could allow dangerous oil to spill, and allow water in to cause contamination.

Uneven base

An incorrectly fitted base could cause a plastic oil tank to experience unusual pressure, particularly when full. This could lead to stretching of the plastic and eventually to the formation of cracks and splits.

It is important that fuel oil storage tanks are properly and correctly installed using a flat, level, concrete base.

Damage caused by freezing temperatures

The most common form of damage experienced by plastic oil storage tanks is caused by the cold and often freezing temperatures in winter. The cold weather causes the plastic of the tank to become brittle. Over a long period of time this can cause damage to the tank, most commonly in the form of splits and cracks.

During the winter months we recommend that our customers check the oil level in their tanks every 2 weeks, to reduce the chances of unexpectedly running dry. We would advise completing a tank inspection at the same time, to check that the weather conditions are not adversely affecting the integrity of your oil tank

What should I do if I spot damage on my oil storage tank?

If you suspect that your oil tank has a fault, we would recommend that you contact our Boiler Maintenance Department to arrange an inspection of your tank. Our experienced engineers will be able to identify and assess any damage and provide further advice on remedial action, or if necessary replacement of your tank.

It is important that any open cracks or splits are covered as soon as they are noticed to prevent water contamination to the fuel inside whilst a replacement tank is organised. As a quick, but temporary fix, a bar of soap can be used to plug smaller cracks and splits. The soap will prevent water from entering the tank, and reduce the chances of oil spilling out.

If you suspect that your oil tank currently has, or may previously have had a leak which has gone unnoticed, please contact our emergency line on 01343 543 535. The number is monitored out of hours and at the weekend too. We will then be able to provide further guidance on containing the spill and the next steps to take to minimise any environmental contamination.

For more information on tank inspections or replacement tanks, or for guidance on maintaining your fuel oil storage tank, contact our boiler maintenance department on 01343 557 435

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How to place an order



Orders and price quotations can be obtained online or by phone.

Online ordering 24/7:

Through our website, we offer the ability to place an order or request a quote from our 'Get-a-Quote' webform. Allowing you to order at a time that is most convenient for you.

Alternatively you can speak to a member of our team through our webchat box on our website, during opening hours.

Order by phone during our opening hours:

Our depots are open Monday—Friday . Opening hours vary between each depot site, however our head office is open 8am-5pm.

Head Office (Elgin) - 0800 833534

Elgin Depot—01343 557400

Cowdenbeath—01383 513968

Aberdeen—01224 877575

Inverness—01463 232114

Mintlaw—01771 622451

Grantown—01479 872573

Connel—01631 710389

Dunoon—01369 704445

Islay—01496 850344

Mull—01680 812374

Boiler maintenance department—01343 557435

Finance department—01343 557466

When will I receive my delivery once I place an order?

During the Autumn and Winter time we do anticipate an increase in the delivery time, as this is our busiest time of year. This is why we always encourage our customers to place an order in plenty of time.

At the time you place your order you should be given an estimated date of delivery.

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Depots:

Aberdeen

Altens Industrial
Estate,
Hareness Road,
Aberdeen,
AB12 3LE

01224 877575

Connel

Station Road,
Connel,
Argyll
PA31 1PA

01631 710389

Cowdenbeath

Broad Street,
Cowdenbeath,
Fife,
KY4 8HQ

01383 513968

Dunoon

Victoria Road,
Dunoon,
Argyll,
PA23 7PA

01369 704445

Elgin

Milnfield,
Elgin,
Moray,
IV30 1UU

01343 557400

Grantown

Strathspey
Industrial Estate,
Grantown-on-
Spey,
PH26 3NB

01479 872573

Inverness

Carsegate Road
North,
Inverness,
IV3 5EB

01463 232114

Islay

Bruichladdich,
Isle of Islay,
Argyll,
PA49 7UN

01496 850344

Mintlaw

Station Road,
Mintlaw,
Aberdeenshire,
AB42 5EB

01771 622451

Mull

Craignure.
Isle of Mull,
Argyll,
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Finance Department

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