

Double Walled Oil Storage Tanks

Version: 1.4

Date: 20th November 2024

Pollution caused by the storage of oil and related substances is a significant environmental problem, accounting for around 12% of all pollution incidents in England and Wales. Following the correct guidelines can lower the risk of such an incident occurring.



Double Walled Oil Storage Tanks



Introduction

The risk of oil being lost from ancillary equipment and pipework is high. The majority of oil pollution incidents are caused by tanks leaking, often during delivery or while being filled. [The Control of Pollution \(Oil Storage\) \(England\) Regulations 2001](#) have helped to improve oil storage and reduce pollution incidents. Although these regulations only apply to England, similar legislation is in place across the UK.

The Law

Under the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001, tanks with external ancillary equipment such as sight tubes, taps and valves must have a secondary containment system to:

- Prevent overfilling
- Minimise damage from third-party interference
- Contain leaks from primary containers or ancillary equipment

This secondary containment system could be:

- An in-situ bund
- A drip tray

However, it does not include:

- Double skinned tanks
- Oil separators

Proprietary Tank Systems

Proprietary tank systems come in a wide range of designs and manufacturers may make certain claims about their environmental performance. However, some form of secondary containment is still required by law. Tank systems should also be protected from impact damage, either by suitable physical barriers, or by being repositioned to a safer area. If correctly designed, manufactured, sited, installed, used and maintained, proprietary tank systems can be just as effective as a conventional in-situ bunded tank.

Double Skinned Tanks

A double skinned tank is a primary tank with another skin placed around it for extra strength, and a very small gap (known as an interstitial space) between the two. All of the pipework or ancillary equipment, such as filling points and delivery hoses, is positioned on the outer skin. Double skinned tanks are sometimes also called integrally bunded, twin walled, or bunded plastic and steel tanks.

Double skinned tanks do not prevent spillages arising from:

- Over-filling
- Failure of a sight glass
- A leaking hose or filling valve

As a result, they are not compliant with the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 unless additional secondary containment is provided for both the tank and its ancillary equipment.

Underground Storage Tanks

[The groundwater protection code of practice](#) applies if underground storage tanks are used to store:

- Petrol
- Diesel
- Heating fuel
- Waste oils
- Other petroleum hydrocarbons

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Sources and Useful Links

- [UK Government: Oil storage regulations for businesses](#)
- [Environment Agency: Prevent groundwater pollution from underground fuel storage tanks](#)

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20th November 2024

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ARMSGI122017

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