

Loss Prevention Standards

Oil Storage - Double Walled Tanks

Introduction

Pollution from the storage of oil and related substances is a significant environmental problem. There are many incidents involving spillage of oil each year, and the majority are caused by oil leaking from tanks, often during delivery/filling of the tank. For several years fuel and oil have accounted for around 12% of all pollution incidents in England and Wales.

[The Control of Pollution \(Oil Storage\) \(England\) Regulations 2001](#) have helped improve the control of oil storage and reduce the number of incidents. These regulations have helped to reduce these incidents by requiring tank owners to provide a secondary containment facility, such as a bund sump or drip tray to prevent oil escaping into the water environment.

Note: These Regulations only apply to England; similar legislation for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is in place.

Double Skinned Tanks

The terms 'double skinned', 'integrally banded', 'twin walled' and 'banded' plastic and steel tanks are often used in relation to oil storage.

A double skinned tank is just that; a primary tank with another 'skin' placed around it with a very small gap (interstitial space) between the two; but the pipework or ancillary equipment such as filling points and delivery hoses/nozzles is positioned outside of the outer skin.

The risk of oil being lost from ancillary equipment and pipework is high; the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 recognise this fact and requires that tanks with external ancillary equipment such as sight tubes, taps and valves are retained within a secondary containment system, generally called a bund.

A double skinned tank does not provide protection against spillages arising from over-filling or failure of a sight glass or from a leaking hose or filling valve/nozzle.

Double skinned tanks are not compliant with the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 unless additional secondary containment is provided for the tank and ancillary equipment, such as an in-situ bund.

You should use the [groundwater protection code of practice](#) if you store petrol, diesel, heating fuel, waste oils or other 'petroleum hydrocarbons' in an underground storage tank (UST).

Proprietary Tank Systems

Proprietary tank systems come in a huge range of designs and are produced by many different manufacturers who may make certain claims about the environmental performance of their products.

Secondary containment does not include:

- double skinned or twin walled tanks, where the tank is surrounded by a second outer skin for extra strength
- oil separators

To comply with the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 tank systems must have some form of secondary containment to:

- prevent incident from overfilling
- minimise damage from third party interference
- contain leaks from primary containers or ancillary equipment

Tank systems should also be protected from impact damage by suitable physical barriers or if possible re-positioned. If well designed, manufactured, sited, installed, used and maintained correctly, proprietary tank systems can be just as effective as a conventional in-situ banded tank.

The [UK Government Oil Storage for Business](#) webpage gives guidance on the above.

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