



Project Part-Financed
by the European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Centre for
Waste Management



NORTH & WESTERN LANCASHIRE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Fact Sheet: Oil Bunding

What is bunding?

Many liquids stored onsite have the potential to leak out and pollute the environment. In order to prevent their escape, tanks containing liquids can be surrounded by a container (a bund). A bund must be able to contain 110% of the tank's volume to prevent it from over-flowing. If possible, bunding should be located away from vehicle traffic to prevent damage which could result from a collision. Bunding is recommended for many liquids including oil, highly flammable liquids and pesticides.

What are the Oil Storage Regulations?

One in every six cases of pollution in the UK is caused by oil contamination. Oil is highly toxic to plants and animals, with just a small amount of oil leading to the devastation of river life by forming a thin film on the surface of water which prevents oxygen from getting to plants and animals. In order to reduce the number of incidents of this type of pollution, the Oil Storage Regulations were introduced in 2001. Under these Regulations, tank owners must provide a secondary containment unit such as a bund or drip tray to contain leaks.

Who do the Regulations apply to?

Anyone who stores more than 200 litres of oil at an industrial, commercial or institutional site must comply with the legislation. The Regulations also apply to households which store in excess of 3,500 litres of oil. The Regulations defines oil as including diesel, petrol, synthetic, vegetable and mineral oils.

Although the Regulations currently only cover England, similar regulations are likely to be introduced in the future that cover Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

What are the requirements of the Oil Storage Regulations?

- The base of the bund has to be impermeable to water and oil. It should be checked periodically for leaks.
- In cases where more than one container is being stored, the bund should be able to store the larger of 110% of the largest tank or 25% of the total storage volume.
- A drainage valve to drain rainwater must not be fitted to the bund.
- The valve, filter, sight gauge, vent pipe or other ancillary equipment must be kept within the bund when not in use.

When do I have to comply with the legislation?

All new oil tanks must comply by being appropriately bunded by 1st March 2002. Existing oil stores which have been identified as being at "significant risk" must comply from 1st September 2003. The remaining existing oil tanks must be bunded

from 1st September 2005. An oil store is usually considered to be a “significant risk” is it is less than 10 metres from a watercourse or 50 metres from a borehole.