

Oil Pollution and The Environment - DID YOU KNOW?

The loss of heating oil to the environment is the most common cause of water pollution. Approximately 40 pollution incidents, involving 8,000 litres of oil, pollute the Island's environment each year.

Oil is extremely damaging to the water environment, ruining habitats and killing plants and wildlife. It is a highly visible form of pollution because it floats on the surface of water. Oil can also dissolve into water, making it difficult and expensive to clean up.

The Island's water resource supports a large diversity of wildlife and is essential for the provision of safe and clean drinking water.



Above: Sample taken from a borehole contaminated with oil.

One in ten people living in Jersey rely on boreholes and wells as their only source of drinking water. A spill of oil onto the ground can move down through the soil, contaminating groundwater.

Oil pollution can also lead to the loss of raw (untreated) water used by the Jersey Water Company to provide clean drinking water to the population of Jersey.

One in ten people living in Jersey rely on groundwater as their only source of drinking water.



Oil Pollution and the Law

Causing or knowingly permitting pollution of controlled waters (eg. streams and groundwater) is an offence under the Water Pollution (Jersey) Law 2000. Strong defences are available to persons adhering to the advice given within this leaflet.

If you extract water from a well, borehole or stream you are required to register or licence it under the Water Resources (Jersey) Law 2007. This will help Environmental Protection to protect your water supply should an oil spill occur. For more details please go to: www.gov.je/water.



Planning and Environment Department

For more information please contact Environmental Protection, Planning and Environment Department, through the Water Pollution Hotline: **Tel: 709535**

*The Building Bye-laws (Jersey) 2007 and details of Building Control's approved scheme, can be found at www.gov.je or by contacting Building Control on (01534) 448400.

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Oil Pollution Your responsibility



Oil - your responsibility

Heating oil tanks, pipework and the oil stored within them are the responsibility of the householder.

The householder must therefore ensure that heating oil does not leak and damage the environment or your property. Following these guidelines will help you to do this.

Oil lost to the aquatic environment can constitute an offence under the Water Pollution (Jersey) Law 2000.

Guidelines for oil storage tanks and pipework

Ensure your oil tank and pipework are of a recognised standard, obtained from a reputable manufacturer and fitted by a registered heating engineer, approved under Building Control's Approved Building Scheme*. All oil tanks and pipework must be fitted in accordance with the relevant requirements of the Building Bye-laws (Jersey) 2007*.

If you are concerned about your oil tank or pipework, contact a registered plumber or heating engineer.

Do not forget to check your house insurance to make sure it covers you for oil lost to the environment and potential damage to your property.

If an oil leak or spill occurs

Collect leaking oil by using a tray or bucket. Do not wash oil into drains and never use a hosepipe or detergent to wash down the area.

Prevent oil from entering drains or watercourses by using earth or sand to absorb it.

Oily sand/soil should be put into sealed bags and taken to La Collette. Contact Transport and Technical Services for advice on disposal of oils and oily sand. Tel: 445509.



How to check your oil tank and pipework



It is your responsibility to regularly check your oil tank and pipework for signs of damage or corrosion. Follow the diagram below to find out what you should be looking for.

Know your tank

There are two types of oil tank:

1. Tanks with an integral bund (bunded tank) i.e. a tank within a tank (see picture below).
2. Single-skinned tanks located in a catch pit (bund) which is sealed and does not leak.

All bunds must be able to contain at least 110% of the full contents of the tank. Single-skinned tanks without a catch pit pose a high environmental risk because there is no way of containing the oil if a leak occurs.

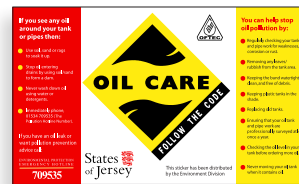
☒ Sun bleaching/cracking of plastic tanks

☒ Rust on metal tanks

Ensure your tank and pipework are easily accessible for maintenance/filling purposes and located as close as possible to the boiler.

Oil tanks should be supported on a flat concrete base in a safe, secure area and be protected from accidental damage.

Make sure your oil tank is clearly labelled with an Oil Care sticker with the Water Pollution Hotline Number. To obtain a sticker call the Pollution Hotline on: 709535.



☒ Integral bund full of water or oil

☒ Obvious signs of leakage or an unusual smell of oil

Be alert to possible leaks by monitoring your oil consumption and usage patterns.

Know your pipework

Ensure that all pipework is located above ground and securely fixed to permanent structures to reduce the risk of accidental damage.

If underground pipework is necessary, it must be installed in a protective sleeving capable of containing leaking oil.

☒ Rusty or corroded feed pipes, couplings or valves

To reduce the volume of oil lost should a leak occur, keep all taps/valves for the sight gauge and between coupled tanks permanently closed.

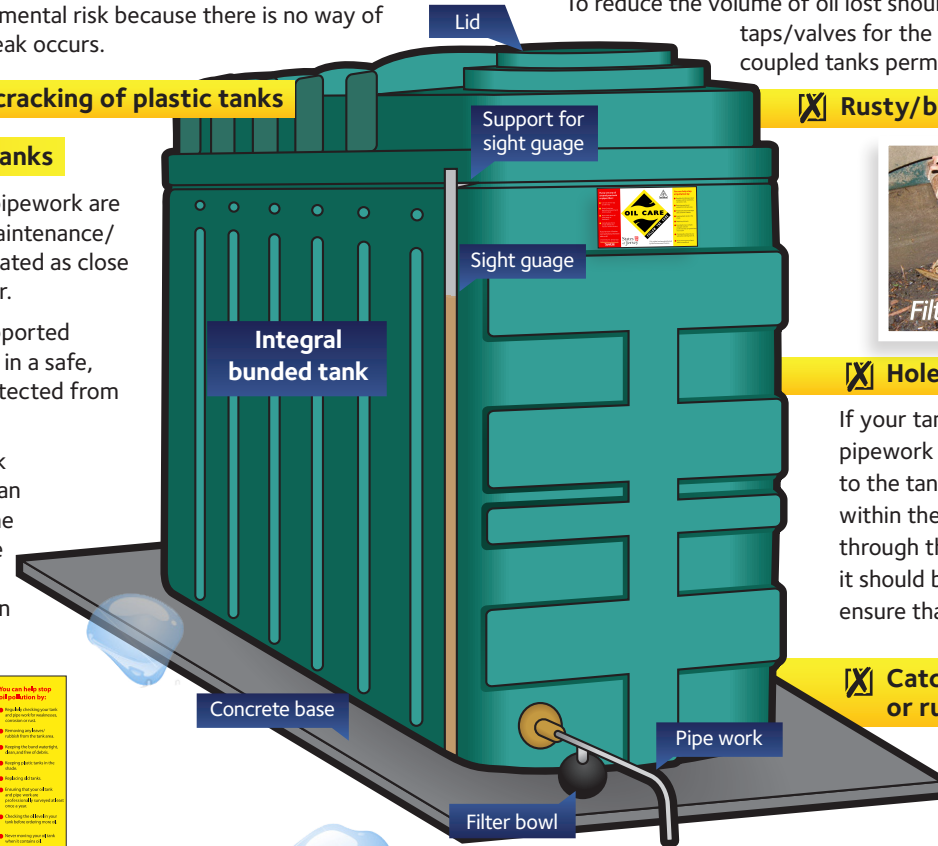
☒ Rusty/buried oil filter bowl



☒ Hole in catch pit

If your tank has a catch pit, all pipework or fittings connected to the tank should be situated within the pit. If pipework passes through the wall of the catch pit, it should be made water tight to ensure that oil cannot leak out.

☒ Catch pit full of water or rubbish



All pipework, including off-set fill pipes, should be regularly inspected and maintained by a registered heating engineer to ensure it is fit for purpose.

☒ Sight gauge that has been knocked or is not properly secured to the tank