

# **Oil Pollution and the Aquatic Environment...**



**YOUR OIL = YOUR  
RESPONSIBILITY**



## OIL POLLUTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT - ARE YOU AWARE OF IT?

The loss of heating oil to the environment is one of the most common forms of water pollution.

Each year, there are approximately 10 major oil pollution incidents reported on the Island, which can contaminate our environment with up to 1,000 litres of oil.

Guernsey's water resources support a large diversity of wildlife and are essential for the provision of safe and clean drinking water. An oil spill to the ground can soak through the soil and travel into the streams which transport rainfall into our water storage reservoirs.

Oil is extremely damaging to the water environment, ruining habitats and damaging plants and wildlife. In addition, it is very difficult for our water treatment processes to remove hydrocarbon molecules (the main constituent of oil) from water. Oil is a highly visible form of pollution as it floats on the water's surface.

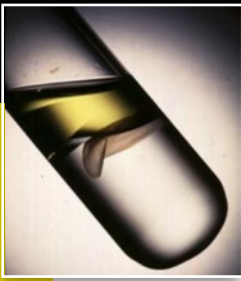
If a stream is polluted with oil, Guernsey Water will not be able to use this stream to collect raw (untreated) water. Therefore, a vital part of the Island's water resources cannot be treated into clean drinking water for the Island's population.

**REMEMBER:** Causing or knowingly permitting pollution of Guernsey's watercourses within the Water Catchment Area is an offence under the Prevention of Pollution (Guernsey) Law, 1989.



Failure to comply with any of the conditions set out by Guernsey Water in this leaflet (or in any other official document) may lead to prosecution.

**To report any pollution or suspected pollution, please call us immediately on 239500.**



# OIL POLLUTION - YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Oil tanks, pipework and the oil stored within them are the responsibility of the property owner. It is therefore the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that oil does not leak and damage the environment.

Following the guidelines in this leaflet will help you do this. In addition to this leaflet, more information on oil pollution and water quality in Guernsey can be found on our website at [www.water.gg](http://www.water.gg).



## A SIMPLE CHECKLIST TO PREVENT POLLUTION

In terms of pollution, prevention is always better than cure. By regularly checking your oil tank and pipework for signs of damage/corrosion, potential problems can be avoided.

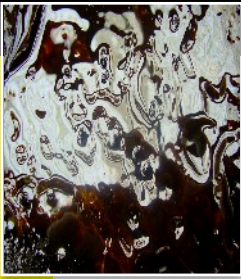
Check for:

- Rust on metal tanks or tank supports
- Sun bleaching/cracking of plastic tanks
- Rusty/buried oil filter bowls
- Rusty or corroded feed pipes, couplings or valves
- Sight gauges that have been knocked or are not properly secured to the tank
- Catchment pits full of water or rubbish
- Holes in bunds/catchment pits
- Obvious signs of leakage or unusual smells of oil

You should be alert to possible leaks by monitoring your oil consumption and usage patterns. It is also worth checking your house insurance to make sure it covers you for oil lost to the environment.



## ABOUT YOUR OIL TANK



Your oil tank should have an integral bund (double-skinned tank) or be located over a catchment pit which is sealed and does not leak. All bunds/pits must be able to contain at least 110% of the full contents of the tank.

All bottom outlet tanks (included bundled ones) must be sited over a catchment pit. Single-skinned tanks without a catchment pit pose a high environmental risk because there is no way of containing the oil if a leak occurs. Oil tanks should be supported on a flat concrete base in a safe and secure area and be protected from accidental damage.

The tank and associated pipework must be fitted in accordance with the Guernsey Water/Environment Department's 'Oil Installation Guidelines' leaflet, which can be viewed either at [www.water.gg](http://www.water.gg) or [www.gov.gg](http://www.gov.gg).

In addition, make sure that your tank is clearly labelled with an Oil Care Sticker. These stickers can be obtained by contacting us on telephone number 293500.

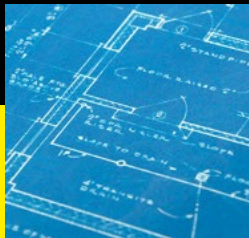


## ABOUT YOUR PIPEWORK



Ensure that all oil-related pipework is located above ground, and is securely fixed to permanent structures so that the potential for accidental damage is reduced.

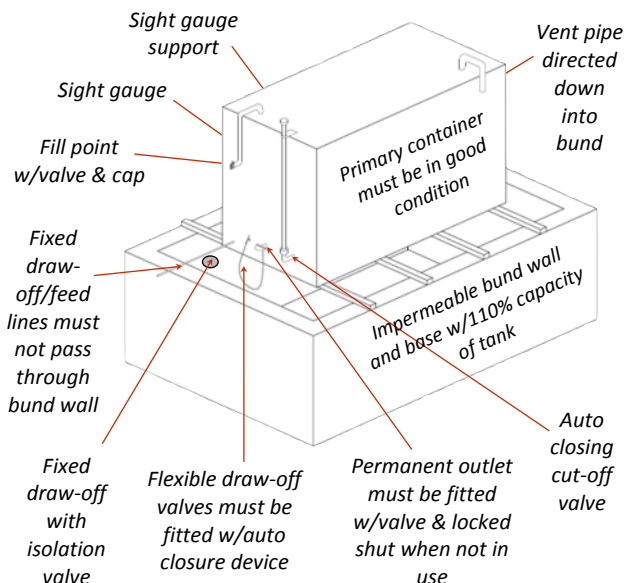
If underground pipework is necessary, it must be installed in a protective sleeving with no joints which is capable of containing an oil leak. Any pipework or fittings connected to the tank should be situated within the catchment pit. All pipework including offset fill pipes should be regularly inspected and maintained to ensure that it is fit for purpose.



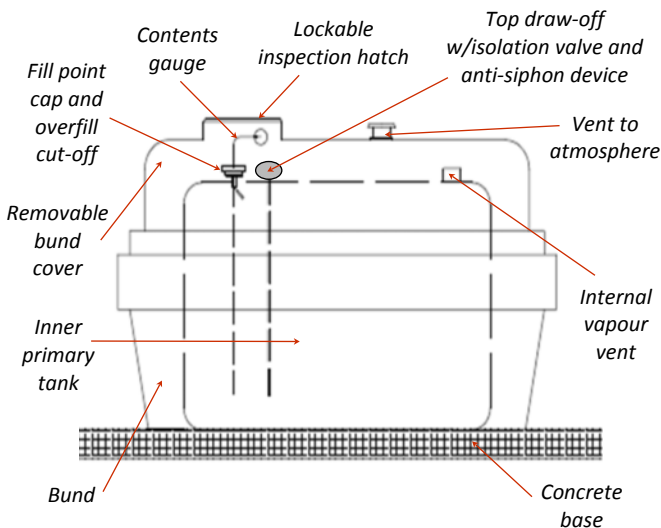
# EXAMPLES OF CORRECT OIL INSTALLATIONS

The two diagrams below show two examples of correctly installed and maintained oil tanks:

## Oil Tank with Catchment Pit:



## Bunded Oil Tank without Catchment Pit:





## IF AN OIL LEAK OR SPILL OCCURS

In the event of an oil leak or spill, you can collect the leaking oil by using a tray or bucket. **Never** wash oil into drains and never use a hosepipe or detergents to wash down the area. To reduce the volume of oil lost should a leak occur, keep all taps and valves for the sight gauge and between coupled tanks permanently closed.

Prevent oil from entering drains or watercourses by using earth or sand to absorb it. Oily sand/soil should then be put into sealed bags.

For information on the disposal of these bags, contact Environmental Health on **711161**. They will need to know rough details of the volume of the contaminated material, and how much oil has been spilled.

Any spillages or leaks should be reported immediately to Guernsey Water via our telephone number - **239500**.



Please note that failure to comply with any of the conditions set out by Guernsey Water in this leaflet (or in any other official document) may lead to prosecution.

Also note that Guernsey Water looks favourably on timely notification and rectification before considering legal proceedings.

### GUERNSEY WATER

- PO Box 30, Brickfield House, St Andrew, GY1 3AS
- Tel: 01481 239500
- **Emergencies: 01481 239500**
- E-Mail: [customer.service@water.gg](mailto:customer.service@water.gg)
- Web: [www.water.gg](http://www.water.gg)