

## **Oil Tank Security**

Theft of heating and diesel oil has been a problem for some time and we notice an increase in all types of theft during austere times. Oil is an expensive commodity and a full tank of oil is worth many hundreds if not thousands of pounds, making it an attractive target for criminals

### **Positioning**

The position of the tank can have a significant effect on whether it will be targeted. If the tank is close to and visible from the house then this may be sufficient to deter the criminal but if it is close to a road or pathway it may become an easier target. If it is hidden behind an outbuilding this may give the criminal privacy while he steal the oil. Not many oil tanks are works of art so you probably do not want it in full view. Of course this will only be a major consideration when a new tank is to be installed. They do need to be sited within a reasonable distance of the road otherwise the oil supply company may not be able to refill it for you! Consider surrounding the area around your tank with a deep layer of gravel. It is impossible to walk quietly over gravel and the noise may alert you to intruders.

### **Locks**

The tank should be locked at all access points including the filling hole. Good quality close shackle padlocks are the best as they offer most resistance to the most popular of burglar tools - the bolt cropper! Due to their design, close shackle padlocks have very little of the metal hoop (shackle) exposed and bolt croppers cannot get a good grip. It is possible to buy padlock that will alarm if it is moved or interfered with, this may deter thieves.

### **Alarms**

Remote electronic oil level gauges are now available which will set off an audible alarm if the oil level in the tank suddenly drops or falls below a quarter full. These gauges are fitted in the tank and a reader unit can be located in the kitchen or perhaps a utility room to warn of any potential problem. There are two or three different versions on the market at the moment and cost between £70 and £150.

### **Lights**

Security lights can have a very positive effect and make any property a much harder target for the thief. Lights with PIR sensors which will activate if anyone gets close to the tank can be a deterrent as long as the light activation will alert you or your neighbours to any intruders. It is not a good idea to install lights in a remote location that will not alert anyone as this may only serve to provide light for the criminals to work under!

## **Defensive Planting**

Nature's way of helping to reduce crime. Thieves will not wish to force their way through or over a prickly hedge. The smallest trace of blood or shred of ripped clothing could help the police identify the offender. These shrubs can, if planted around your tank, provide an effective and decorative thief proof barrier. Types that may deter criminals include Holly, Pyracantha (firethorn), Berberis and Blackthorn, any good garden centre will be able to advise you on this.

## **Fencing**

Fences and walls can also make life difficult for the thief. A wooden or metal fence, trellis or wall can give significant protection to the tank and may protect it from being pierced to access the contents but remember that the oil tanker driver will need access to fill the tank! A metal grill or cage with a lockable access point across the top of this wall or fence can further improve security. It is also possible to purchase a sheet metal enclosure, which has lockable access doors to allow filling and maintenance and has internal anchorage points to fix it to the concrete base. This will cost less than one tank full of oil and will last for many years.

## **CCTV**

The use of CCTV as crime prevention and a crime detection tool has become popular in recent years. However please bear in mind that this may act as an aid to identifying a criminal it is unlikely to act as a deterrent.. A good CCTV system that will work in all light conditions (most thefts occur in the night) will cost several hundred pounds, but often the picture quality from home systems is not good enough to identify offenders.

Finally please check if your tank and contents are covered on your household insurance and if so, see if there are conditions laid down by the insurers and see that these are adhered to.

If you require any further information or assistance please contact  
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Or call 101 and leave your contact details