

Clean environment

Safe storage of industrial chemicals, oil and toxic material

Pollution from storage

Toxic substances may cause severe problems if they are spilled and enter the drainage system. Dangers include the risk of explosion, toxic fumes and pollution.

Most pollution incidents happen because of ignorance, accidents and vandalism. No company should risk being caught out, because pollution costs and fines still apply, regardless of what causes the pollution. It is the responsibility of a company to minimise pollution risks from their operation and storage. This guide explains how to do this and what is needed to comply with the legislation.

What are the dangers?

Spillages of chemicals or fuels may produce toxic fumes, may damage sewers and may prevent proper waste water treatment, causing raw sewage to be discharged to rivers. Spillages may also cause pollution of the environment and harm wildlife.

If you think something is a pollution hazard on your premises you can call our Customer Helpline on **0845 601 8855** for advice.

Regulations

The main regulations regarding oil storage are:

Water Environment (Oil Storage) (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and General Binding Rule 11 – discharge to a surface water drainage system. More details can be found in the Scottish Oil Storage Regulations leaflet. This can be viewed by visiting the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) website at www.sepa.org.uk.

Make use of bunding

All drums, sacks and containers holding oil, chemicals or waste materials should be kept within a bunded (walled) area. The bund should be of an impervious sealed construction with a capacity at least 10 per cent greater than the largest fixed container within it. Ideally, the area should be covered to prevent rainwater accumulating.

The bunded area must **not** have any drainage outlet. If rainwater does not evaporate, it should be bailed or pumped out manually. Alternatively, you can fit specialist equipment designed to extract water from bunds without taking any oil residues, and which gives an alarm when additional action is needed.

As this rainwater may be contaminated it must **never** be discharged to a surface water or highway (road) drain, as this may cause river pollution. Call us to seek permission to discharge it to foul sewer via an oil separator, or use an authorised waste contractor. Refer to telephone directories or the internet for a company based near you.

Make use of bunding – continued

For tanks: Taps or valves fixed to any tank should be within the bund and kept shut and locked when not in use. Any flexible pipes used for discharging from a tank should be fitted with a valve which automatically closes. The pipe should be locked away within the bund when not in use. Please call our Customer Helpline on **0845 601 8855** and ask for a copy of our guide TEQ05 on above-ground storage tanks.

Wherever possible pipelines should be installed above ground so that any leakage can be easily detected.

Protect against vandalism

Make sure all chemical and oil storage is protected against vandalism with locks, fencing and alarms as appropriate. Outlet pipes should always be padlocked when not in use.

Make deliveries safe

As there is a great risk of spillage and pollution during delivery, it is important to have good written procedures and to follow them to minimise any risk.

Pollution is easily caused by overfilling tanks or filling the wrong tank, therefore the tank must have an adequate means of measuring the volume of oil present.

Deliveries must always be supervised throughout by a responsible person who must check that there is adequate capacity for a delivery. Appropriate equipment and material should be available to clean up any spill that does occur. This might include absorbent material such as sand or sawdust, absorbent 'pigs', and drain covers. All personnel must know where the equipment is stored and be trained in when and how to use it.

The drainage system serving delivery areas should be adequately protected. This may be by an interceptor, or by a valve sealing the system off while the delivery takes place. The valve can be re-opened once a delivery has been made. Temporary drain covers may also be used.

In the event of a spillage:

- always try to contain the spillage;
- never hose a spillage to drain, and never use detergents or oil dispersants;
- use absorbent material, sand or sawdust to soak it up;
- block any drains, manholes etc; and
- call our Emergency Helpline immediately on **0845 600 8855**.

Preventing Pollution

In the short term you may feel that paying for facilities such as good bunding and storage is costly. However, it is the responsibility of all individuals and companies to ensure that their activities do not harm the environment. Following our guidelines may cost more now, but this will help to save money for your business in the long run.

Preventing Pollution – continued

The fines for pollution are up to £40,000, and those responsible for pollution can face a massive clean-up bill and possible prosecution. It is, therefore, in all our interests to ensure that pollution does not happen. New regulations regarding oil storage are to come out shortly which may specify minimum standards for oil storage installations. Contact our Customer Helpline on **0845 601 8855**, or your local SEPA office for advice. This information can be found by visiting the SEPA website at www.sepa.org.uk.

Further Information

If you need to speak to someone directly or need more information and advice on pollution prevention/trade effluent quality please call our Customer Helpline on **0845 601 8855** and ask to speak to a member of our Trade Effluent Quality team.

Please call our Emergency Helpline on **0845 600 8855** to report an emergency relating to any risk of water pollution to the public water supply or sewer system.

You can write to us at:

Scottish Water
PO Box 8855
Edinburgh
EH10 6YQ

Alternative formats of this guide can be made available free of charge. For information on Braille, large print, audio and variety of languages, please call 0845 606 8855.

We record all calls for quality and training purposes.