

Defensive perimeter planting

Thieves will not want 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. Some effective natural planting includes: Berberis x Stenopylla Crataegus Monogvna (Hawthorn) Ilex Aquifolium (Holly) Pyracantha (Firethorn) Rosa Rugosa. A trellis can be decorated with defensive planting.

Securing your oil tank

Following on from the defensive planting tactic, fences and walls can also make life difficult for thieves. A properly sited wooden or metal fence or trellis can give significant protection in obscuring the tank. A metal grill or cage with a lockable access point across the top will greatly improve tank security.

Top tips in summary

- Install and secure perimeter gating, restricting access
- Install dusk to dawn security lighting
- Install lockable caps, supported by closed shackle padlocks (check you are insured for any seepages)
- Consider installing a tank alarm/CCTV monitoring
- Join a Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) scheme to keep an eye out for suspicious vehicles/persons
- Make a note of the registration number of any suspicious vehicles and if in doubt report any suspicions/concerns to the police

Closed circuit television (CCTV)

The use of CCTV as a crime prevention and a crime detection tool has grown immensely in recent years. It could play a part in the protection of oil tanks, but before you spend a lot of money on equipment make an assessment as to your needs.

Ask yourself:

1. What do I hope to achieve by using CCTV?
2. How much am I prepared to spend?
3. Is there a reasonable level of light where the cameras will be operating, or do I need to think about using cameras with low light capability? (Most thefts occur at night)
4. What am I going to record the captured images on? (Digital recordings are best)
5. How am I going to provide the police with any evidence I capture?
6. Have I considered Data Protection considerations?

**For further advice on heating & diesel oil thefts,
or to obtain advice from your local Crime
Reduction Officer**

**For Suffolk Police contact:
01473 613500 or visit
www.suffolk.police.uk**

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Heating Oil Security Advice

**Don't Become a Victim
Protect your oil tank**



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Heating Oil Theft

Theft of heating and diesel oil has been a problem for many years and the police have noticed an increase in this type of crime whenever the price of crude oil rises.

A rise in the price of fuel at the petrol pump inevitably leads to a rise in the cost of heating oil.

This makes oil a more attractive proposition for the thief and they are now actively targeting fuel tanks at farms, transport depots and domestic properties.

The thief may be using the oil for

their own central heating or selling it on to make a handsome profit.

These tanks can contain many thousands of pounds worth of oil and it therefore makes very good sense to take a few precautions to protect such a valuable commodity.

The purpose of this leaflet is to give the reader a few ideas about what can be done to make life more difficult for the thief.

OFTEC (the Oil Firing Technical Association for the petroleum

industry) offers advice and guidance for those who use and store oil at their premises.

There are certain rules and regulations that may apply to you, in particular with regard to building regulations and OFTEC will help clarify these.

They can be contacted at www.oftec.org.uk or by calling 0845 6585 080.

They also produce 'An Easy Guide to Domestic Oil Storage' which is a very straightforward and useful document.

Padlocks

A thief will usually come equipped with a limited range of tools to attack your tank so it's worth spending a little more on good quality locks. Closed shackle padlocks are best as they offer most resistance to the most popular of burglar tools, namely the bolt cropper. Due to their design, closed shackle padlocks have very little of the metal hoop (shackle) exposed and bolt croppers cannot get a good grip.



Alarm padlocks

Another recent security measure available is a padlock with a built-in alarm, which activates, when tampered, at up to 110 decibels.

Security oil level gauges/linked alarms

Remote electronic oil level gauges are now available, which will set off an audible alarm if the oil level in the tank suddenly falls in fuel level. These gauges are sited within the house to warn of any potential problem. If you have already installed an alarm for your property ask your provider if they can also add an alarm link to your heating oil tank.

Security lights

Security lights, can have a very positive effect and make any property a much harder target for thieves. It is not always necessary to floodlight the area with high power beams, as a more subtle level of lighting may be all that is needed. Low energy 'dusk 'til dawn' lights positioned close to the tank should, in most cases, provide sufficient light to illuminate any suspicious activity. This type of light can be both effective and inexpensive. High powered lights can be used but care should be taken not to cause any nuisance to neighbours or road users.



Check your insurance

Check with your insurance provider that you are not only insured for fuel thefts, but also any oil seepages, either through wear and tear or deliberately caused by an offender. The cost of any resulting environmental clean up could prove expensive.



Positioning your oil tank

The position of the tank can have a significant effect on how hard a target it is in the eyes of a thief. If the tank is within good view of the house, then the thief may consider the risk of being seen too high.

If the tank is close to a road, path, drive or alleyway then it will be a far easier target. Hiding the tank behind the garage, shed or some other type of outbuilding is fairly commonplace but, on the other hand, it could help to conceal the thief.

Remember your tank should be positioned in a way that will not prevent the oil supply company from being able to gain access to refill the tank.