



## OIL AND FUEL THEFT

### OIL AND FUEL THEFT

With the recent dramatic rise in price of fuel, it is possible that oil and fuel tanks will become a more tempting target for thieves, below is some crime prevention advice to help make yours more secure. Thieves target fuel tanks at businesses, farms, transport depots and homes. They may use it for their own purposes or sell it on at a profit. While we are working hard to bring these criminals to justice, there are steps you can take to protect yourself from fuel theft. Oil is a valuable commodity, so it makes good sense to take precautions and invest a small amount of money, if you can, to prevent thieves targeting your tank.

#### Location of your oil tank

The position and appearance of the tank can have a significant effect on how difficult it is to target in the eyes of the thief. If the tank is close to your house, with one or more windows overlooking it, a thief may consider their chances of being seen too high. If the tank is close to a road, path, drive or alleyway, it is far easier to target. Hiding your tank behind a garage, shed or outbuilding is an option, but it can give a thief the advantage of working unseen.

#### Invest in quality padlocks

A thief will usually come equipped with tools to attack your tank so it's worth investing in good quality locks. Close shackle padlocks are most effective as they offer most resistance to tools such as bolt croppers. If possible, padlocks should be shrouded to make bolt cropping of locks or brackets difficult for an offender. Lockable caps for your tank's fill point and inspection chamber is the easiest method to prevent fuel from being siphoned out of the tank's access points. This should be one of your first actions to take.

Consider protecting vulnerable hoses with stronger casing to ensure they are harder to cut by a thief.

#### Hide your oil - Consider camouflage

Surround your oil tank with tall plants if the area gets adequate sun. Leave a space of several feet between the tank and the bushes. Bushes like juniper, holly, lilac or boxwood provide width and height when fully grown as well as looking attractive. Use evergreen bushes for full coverage at all times of year.

- Surround your oil tank with tall plants.
- Install a trellis fence and cover it with hanging vines such as cucumber or trumpet vine. Place a gate on

one side to allow access for oil refilling or repair.

- Use prefabricated fence panels to construct a fence that goes around the entire oil tank.
- Defensive planting is nature's way of helping to reduce crime. Thieves will not want to force their way through or over a thorny hedge.

### **Fit oil level gauges and tank alarms**

Remote electronic oil level gauges are now available. They set off an alarm if the oil level in the tank suddenly drops or falls below a quarter full. Devices that send an alert to your mobile phone are also available.

### **Security lighting**

It is advised that you install PIR (motion activated) lighting in the area of your tank. Static lighting can aid an offender in their crime, whereas lighting that goes on and off is likely to alert you or passers by to someone being outside, and is also can deter the offender.

### **Make some noise with gravel**

Consider gravelling the access route to your tank, or around the tank. This will make noise when it is walked over. This could serve to alert you and deter a potential thief.

### **Walls and fencing**

A wooden or metal fence, trellis or wall can give significant protection to the tank. A metal grill or cage with a lockable access point across the top of this wall or fence can further improve security.

### **'Defensive planting'**

Planting thorny shrubs and bushes around your diesel oil tank provides an effective and decorative thief-proof barrier as thieves don't want to force their way through or over a prickly hedge, as the smallest trace of blood or shred of ripped clothing could help police identify them.

The following plants can be effective - but remember you will still need access to fill the tank:

- Pyracantha
- Berberis Julianae
- Mahonia Bealei – Winter Sun
- Ulex Europaeus – Common Gorse
- Hippanphae Rhamniodes – Sea Buckthorn
- Berberis Ottawensis Superba
- Berberis Stenophylla
- Berberis Gagnepainii
- Crataegus Monogyna – Common Hawthorn

- Rosa Fruhlings Gold-Yellow
- Rosa Rugosa Rubra Crimson
- Rosa Blanc Double de Coubert

## **CCTV**

The use of CCTV as a crime prevention and detection tool has grown immensely in recent years. However you must ensure that cameras don't overlook your neighbours' private property or focus solely on pavements or public. CCTV that goes to monitoring station or alerts you via a mobile phone app is far more effective than that which shows a historic offence

## **Additional Security for Business**

Fuel dye can act as a deterrent as the Police can easily identify if fuel has stolen. Criminals will be forced to consider whether it's worth stealing fuel that is protected and easily identifiable, it also makes the fuel more difficult to sell on. Some haulage firms in the UK now use fuel dye specifically so any stolen fuel can be traced back to their companies, as fuel can be their biggest expense to their business and thus warrants being protected by any means.

Do you have CCTV implemented on site?

What signs do you have on site to deter thieves?

- Warning CCTV in operation
- Security patrols in operation
- Cat converters and property security marked
- Fuel tank has theft alarms installed

## **Is your tank in a secure location?**

- It is important to keep the perimeter of your site secure. Strong and high quality fencing and gates can deter the opportunistic thief, and it should slow the progress of the more organised thieves so that your other security measures such as CCTV or sensor alarms have longer to respond.
- If you hold a very large amount of diesel on site, it is worth considering storing your fuel in a steel tank with roller shutter secure doors to prevent access to the tank. If you have one of these tanks, then make sure keys for the roller shutter doors are kept in a secure place.

Is your tank visible to the general public?

There are two schools of thought here, is it better to have it openly displayed where anyone can see it – deterring thieves who are afraid of being caught in the act? Or is it better to hide the tank away, where opportunistic thieves may not even know of its location? For businesses with a lot of fuel on site, we believe that the more secure your tank is, the better. If possible it should be locked away from sight in a secure and gated location, but obviously still accessible so that your business can operate seamlessly.

**Message Sent By**

Nigel Bolton

(Police, PC, South Worcestershire)

---

To reply or forward please use the below or these links: [Reply](#), [Rate](#), [Forward / Share](#).

To login to your account, [click here](#), To report a fault, [click here](#)

Please note that it is not possible to report crimes or incidents via Neighbourhood Matters. To make a report of a crime or incident, please contact West Mercia Police at [www.westmercia.police.uk](http://www.westmercia.police.uk) or dial 999 in an emergency.

