

Oil storage & pollution prevention

Guidance on storage of new and waste oils

March 2016

Appropriate storage of new and waste oil on your vessel is vitally important to help protect water quality.

Oil Storage Regulations (2001)

The Oil Storage Regulations (OSR) require that containers of new oil products over 200 litres in capacity must be stored with secondary containment to ensure that any spills or leaks are captured. Containers with new oil of 200 litre capacity must comply with the Oil Storage Regulations when on vessels. This applies to IBC's, oil drums, fixed tanks and mobile bowsers. You must also follow these rules if you've got an oil storage container with a capacity of 3,501 litres or more at a home (including barges and houseboats). It is strongly recommended that all oil storage containers, or containers that may hold solvents, chemicals, paints etc, are placed on a drip tray or have a form of secondary containment so any spillages are stopped from entering the river.

Oil is the one of the most common substances that is reported to the Environment Agency as causing pollution. It is persistent in the environment and in severe pollutions can cause a reduction in the dissolved oxygen concentration of the river. This can cause fish deaths and have negative impacts on the aquatic life in a river as well as reducing the amenity use of the river. Many vessels store oil on board and inappropriate storage and transport of oil is likely to cause pollution. Waste mineral oil is classified as hazardous waste and should be collected by a waste carrier registered with the Environment Agency. The waste carrier must produce a hazardous waste consignment note when collecting this waste.

It is recommended that spill kits should be kept on board vessels in order to contain any accidental spillages or leaks. Spill kits could include items such as booms, saw dust and absorbent pads to ensure any releases do not enter the river. Any spill kits used to contain oil must be treated as hazardous waste. Your oil tank should be inspected to check the integrity of the containment once a month and all deliveries of oil to a fixed tank must be supervised.

Under the Oil Storage Regulations a range of oils must have appropriate storage including:

Petrol, diesel, kerosene, vegetable oils, synthetic oils, hydraulic oils, biodegradable oils, although this is not an exhaustive list.

Failure to comply with regulations is likely to result in pollution to the environment. There is a range of enforcement sanctions available to tackle non-compliance with these regulations. These range from a warning letter to enforcement notices up to prosecution.

All oil spills from vessels are reportable and therefore should be notified to the MCA. If you notice oil pollution in the river then this should be reported to the Port of London Authority via VTS on 0208 855 0315.

Further Guidance on the storage of oil is available on the Environment Agency pages of the Gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/oil-storage-regulations-and-safety> and

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/storing-oil-at-a-home-or-business>

The Oil Care Campaign which is supported by the Environment Agency has useful guidance for boat owners on the storage of oils:

<http://oilcare.org.uk/look-after-your-oil/boat-owners>