



Heating Oil Theft Advice

The 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 over the past month in rural areas. 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.

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.

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.

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

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. 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.

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.

Suffolk Police are asking everybody to look out for any suspicious persons or vehicles in the area following a delivery of heating oil and to report this to Police as soon as possible. For further advice on heating & diesel oil thefts, or to obtain advice from your local Crime Reduction Officer please dial 101.