

## Look after your Heating Oil

Theft of heating oil has been an issue for rural areas for some time, but it can be a particular problem at this time of year as home owners get their supplies for the winter months.

Coupled with rises in the cost of fuel; oil has become a much more attractive target for thieves.

Consider the position of the tank can it be viewed easily from the house? If it is close to a road or pathway it is more at risk. Think about using prickly, thorny plants to hide the tank from view, traces of blood or ripped clothing may help to identify the offender.

Be aware of oil levels and check them regularly. Remote oil level gauge alarms are available and cost between £60 - £85, they will set off an audible alarm if the oil level in the tank suddenly drops or falls below a quarter full. Note for those who are 65yrs or over the Bobby Scheme now offer Heating Oil Alarms as part of their range. There is a charge to supply and install the alarm.

The Bobby Scheme Tel: 07866 602100

Use good quality padlocks, and lockable fuel caps a thief will not want to spend a long time trying to attack your tank. Look for closed shackle padlocks, as they will be more difficult to break. Look for quality marks and attack tested products (see [www.soldsecure.com](http://www.soldsecure.com))

If you have a plastic tank, consider erecting fencing around the tank with one end hinged and locked for filling purposes. The fencing should be fixed to solid posts and set off the tank approx. 12" on all sides. Other options include a metal cage or grill with lockable access point across the top. A specialist product called 'Tank guard' surrounds the tank with metal enclosure, the sheet metal enclosure has lockable access doors, to allow filling and maintenance plus internal anchorage points fixing it to the concrete base. A tank guard costs less than one tank full of oil and will last many years.

CCTV may help to deter thieves if there is very little natural surveillance, before you spend money on equipment make an assessment of your needs.

If you have outside security lighting, ensure that the system works and that the light sensors have been adjusted correctly to detect movement.

Deter thieves from entering your property by using good perimeter security such as good fencing and strong lockable gates. Maintain boundaries and perimeter fencing/ hedges.

Be vigilant by noting unusual/ out of place vehicle registration numbers, and report suspicious activity to the Police.

OFTEC also offer advice and guidance to those using and storing oil. Contact [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org)