



SECURED BY DESIGN SECURITY ADVICE GUIDE

Fuel Theft

Fuel theft is a significant and wide-ranging crime problem that affects many different areas, people and businesses across the UK, including farming, motorists, homeowners, the construction industry (including the marine construction sector) and suppliers. The impact of this type of theft on people and the economy is exacerbated during periods of inflated oil prices.

Our advice offers best practice for you to follow, alongside practical crime prevention methods and includes links to Secured by Design member companies that can offer products designed to reduce the risk of fuel theft. These products have been tested and certified to meet the exacting standards you would expect from the products meeting the preferred police specification.

There has also been a run of cooking oil theft in some communities, to read more on how to reduce your risk of this crime, check out our [‘Theft of cooking oil’](#) advice.



Theft from Fuel Tanks

Static above ground fuel tanks and mobile bowers are most at risk of fuel theft, both domestic heating oil tanks and diesel tanks on farms and construction sites.

Theft techniques include syphoning the fuel into a plastic container or using a fuel transfer pump to steal from larger bulk vehicles, or in the case of bowers, driving off with them when they are out on site.

Damaging the tank during the theft process and the subsequent environmental consequences is the least of these criminals' concerns. In addition to causing damage to the tanks themselves by smashing the supply pipes, valves or puncturing the tank, these thieves often create environmental issues when the remaining fuel leaks into the ground, resulting in high clean-up costs.

Vehicles and onsite machinery are also at risk, especially overnight, and fuel theft can lead to costly delays.



Reform of Fuel Use

The UK government removed the entitlement to use red diesel and other rebated biofuels for most sectors from April 2022.

This means users of heavy plant machinery and equipment such as non-road mobile machinery like dumpers, power generators and excavators, aside from in the agriculture, horticultural and forestry sectors, will no longer be able to run on red diesel.

While the government does not anticipate these reforms to red diesel use will lead to white diesel theft at scale in the affected industries, fuel users storing diesel in tanks or in vehicles and machinery on their site(s) should continue to take steps to ensure this is stored securely.



Taking these steps can reduce the risk

Fuel Tanks



Implement management systems

A fuel Management system can be crucial to identify fuel theft, especially where there may be many users or the tank is located out of sight. A good fuel management system should enable the owner to accurately record the users, date and time of use, provide the first line of defence against unauthorised use via a key fob, code or similar and constantly monitor fuel levels (crucial when the tank is refilled as theft can take place during this process).



Keep the tank visible

Where possible locate the tank where it can be viewed from a habitable building and where increased natural surveillance can be maximized, such as insight of a farmhouse or construction site offices, especially the security office if it is occupied during the night. Fuel tanks located away from buildings or dwellings are more vulnerable if they cannot be seen by occupants or staff, especially if vehicular access is not restricted.



Reduce access points

Keep access points to the fuel depot on sites to a minimum, keep gates closed and locked and block exit points that are not used.



Use SBD approved products

Consider the introduction of perimeter fencing and associated gates to LPS 1175 issue 8.1 A1 (SR1) or above standard, subject to a location security risk analysis to identify threats and vulnerabilities. Where gates are secured by a padlock or a similar locking mechanism, ensure that it meets a Secured by Design (SBD) approved standard. Where compounds, gates and other features are secured by locks that require keys, ensure that there are adequate key control measures in place to prevent uncontrolled key removal, substitution of the lock itself or copying of such keys.



Fit an alarm

Fit a fuel tank alarm and monitoring system to notify you of an attack on fuel tanks. Remote electronic fuel level gauges will set off an audible or monitored alarm if the fuel level in the tank suddenly drops or falls below a defined level. Where fuel tanks are in remote locations, we recommend that they be housed in a secure alarmed steel container.



Use anti-siphoning devices

Fuel tanks should also be fitted with a locking fuel cap and anti-siphoning devices. Anti-siphoning devices are installed in the filler aperture of the fuel tank to stop a pipe from being dipped into the fuel and the fuel being pumped or syphoned out of the tank. These products also work on HGVs or construction plant, as well as on static on-site fuel tanks. Always ensure you use an accredited lock that meets the Police Preferred Specification.



Consider a detection system

On high-risk exposed sites, an additional detection system should be considered such as a Perimeter Intrusion Detection System (PIDS). SBD currently accredits a number of fencing manufacturers and installers who between them can provide fencing solutions for all situations and circumstances.



Restrict access

Where a perimeter treatment is not a suitable option, consider the introduction of bollards or other vehicle mitigation measures which will help restrict easy access to the fuel storage asset.

General Security



Install lighting

Install security lighting to illuminate any suspicious activity and if CCTV is installed on the site or premises the lighting scheme should be designed to complement it and not create shadows or glare which can inhibit or restrict the images being captured.



Use remote monitoring

CCTV with remote monitoring is a deterrent and will help protect both farms and construction sites. Due to the remote nature of some of these sites and the geographical area they cover, any CCTV systems should include surveillance of areas with high risk such as fuel tanks. Remote monitoring 24/7 by an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) can confirm the cause of an alarm activation and identify any suspicious activity.



Consider mobile CCTV systems

Consider a mobile CCTV unit and PIDS on vulnerable sites – SBD have several members who specialise in this area and can advise on the best solution.



Check CCTV coverage

Ensure that any installed CCTV is not blocked, or its coverage is restricted by the parking of large vehicles in the sight lines of the camera. During the day this should be the responsibility of the site manager and security staff should check this when they start their shift. Landscaping or vegetation which could restrict the coverage of these cameras during the growing seasons must be maintained and cut back to ensure unimpeded coverage.



Use Signage

Use signage to highlight the security measures you have installed. This can help deter criminals who may casually walk through the site to gain a greater understanding of the security. These could include signs such as: Private property, Keep out, Warning CCTV in operation, All vehicles are left with minimum fuel, Security patrols in operation.



Secure & lock

Secure vehicles and machinery in a compound or container if possible and use a locking fuel tank cap and anti-syphoning devices.



Activate alarms

Activate intruder alarm systems, which may have a local sounder or remotely monitored signalling. For more information on alarms, visit <https://www.policesecuritysystems.com/>



Consider manned guarding

Depending on the threat and risk to the whole site, manned guarding can be a highly effective visible deterrent. Any company providing security personnel should be approved by the Security Industry Authority (SIA) under their approved contractor scheme.



Construction site security

Secured by Design have produced a guide for [Construction Site Security](#) which provides advice on how to secure a site from the very start to the end of construction.

The guide has been produced with advice and assistance from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), Police Scotland, the Considerate Constructors Scheme, the London Fire Brigade (LFB), the National Business Crime Centre, Sold Secure, the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC).

Forecourt theft

BOSS – the British Oil Security Syndicate – has been campaigning to reduce forecourt crime and keep petrol stations safe and secure for more than 30 years through working with retailers and the police to tackle forecourt crime including bilking, Drive-Off and No Means of Payment incidents.

BOSS estimates that forecourt fuel crime costs forecourts nearly £100 million every year.

BOSS help to recover more than £15 million every year on behalf of forecourt operators and their BOSS Payment Watch service has become the most successful deterrent against potential offenders.



Current regulations on fuel storage can be found at [Gov UK – Oil Storage Regulations for Businesses](#)

If you decide to use CCTV, please read our advice around [CCTV systems](#).

For further advice about any of the security tips listed above, or to find out how to buy police recognised security products, visit www.securedbydesign.com