

With the spiralling cost of all fuel oil types, the theft of these commodities is becoming a more attractive proposition to potential offenders throughout the country.

For obvious reasons, bulk fuel is probably the most attractive target. Therefore, this advice is aimed at that section of our community; farmers, householders and businesses; particularly those in rural communities, who have heating or fuel oil, such as diesel stored in external tanks.

The following advice may help improve the security of your supply:

- The simple act of keeping your yard or drive gates closed and securely locked could prevent a theft.
- Ensure gates and fences are in good repair.
- Consider installing Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) along with suitable lighting.
- The location of storage tanks can be a critical factor.
- Ideally they should be situated within sight of your home, office or business while at the same time being difficult to see by the general public.
- Plant hostile (thorny) shrubs around your tank, e.g. Pyrocanthia, Berberis, Ilex or even Gooseberry
- Regularly check your fuel levels so that you can easily spot if the level drops.
- Tank valves should be locked as should any inspection or filling hatches and consideration should be given to purchasing a remote electronic oil level gauge which will set off an audible alarm if the oil level in the tank suddenly drops or falls below a certain level. Install lockable caps with crop proof padlocks/fittings and where possible provide vulnerable fuel hoses with hardened/flexible casing so that they are harder to cut.
- Remember when buying alarms, CCTV, locks or any security devices, the better the quality the longer it will last.
- If you are installing or re-siting an oil tank, consider securing the tank in an alarmed, ventilated, brick or block built, locked structure. Consideration could also be given to surrounding the tank in a weld mesh lockable cage, however also remember that the oil tanker driver will need access to fill the tank!
- Check your oil is covered by your household or business insurance.
- Record the details of any unfamiliar vehicles and their occupants seen in the area.

- It is very important to mark your property with your postcode, including items in your shed and garage and please don't leave valuable items on view. Items that are marked are less likely to be stolen, however, if they are stolen and recovered, they can be returned to the rightful owner. Forensic Marking solutions are also available such as SmartWater, SelectaDNA as well as CrimeStoppers solutions and if you are interested in these security systems, please contact your local Crime Reduction Officer for further advice.

Should you need to discuss any of these security measures, or you require specific crime prevention advice please contact your local Crime Reduction Officer- by phoning *01233 896336*