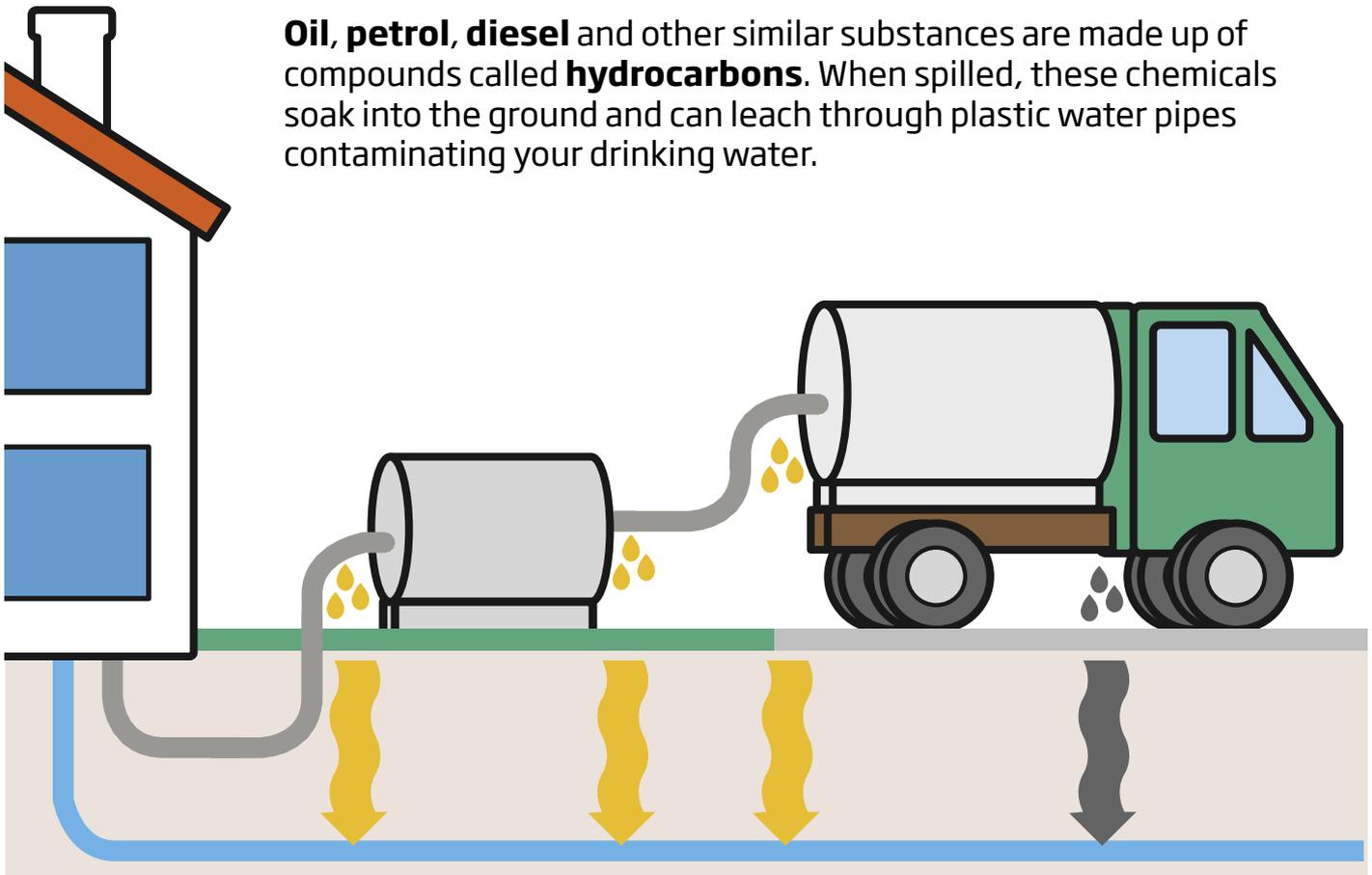


FUEL CONTAMINATION AND YOUR WATER SUPPLY

Oil, petrol, diesel and other similar substances are made up of compounds called **hydrocarbons**. When spilled, these chemicals soak into the ground and can leach through plastic water pipes contaminating your drinking water.



Over time this type of contamination may affect the taste and/or odour of your drinking water. You might notice a petrol, diesel, oily or solvent taste and/or odour. However, it can take weeks, months or even years for the chemical to travel through soil, leach through the plastic pipe and affect your water supply.

To determine whether there has been oil contamination, the following information will be useful to have to hand:

- Do you have an oil/fuel storage tank at the property?
- Where is it in relation to your water pipe?
- Where does the oil line from the storage tank go?
- Are you aware of any recent or historic oil leaks or spills?
- Have you recently had the storage tank filled up or moved?
- Does the oil delivery tanker park close to where your water pipe runs?
- Are there any vehicles parked above the route the water supply pipe takes leaking fuel or oil?
- Has a motor vehicle accident occurred on a nearby road where damage to the vehicle has led fuel/oil to be spilled near to your water pipe?

If you detect any such taste or odour in your water, call us immediately on

0345 600 4 600

USEFUL CONTACTS

Wessex Water operational enquiries

0345 600 4 600

Environment Agency emergency pollution hotline

0800 80 70 60

EA oil storage guidance

www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/oil-storage

OFTEC (Oil Firing Technical Association)

www.oftec.org

HOW DO YOU RESOLVE THE ISSUE?

- 1 If you detect a taste or odour that suggests oil or fuel contamination, contact us immediately. We will test your water supply to confirm whether hydrocarbons are present and provide an approximate concentration. Based on these results, we may have to issue precautionary advice not to drink the water.
- 2 We will help investigate the source of the contamination. In most cases oil is found to have contaminated the ground and affected a plastic water supply pipe. In these circumstances, the entire plastic water pipe should be replaced with a type of barrier pipe. Once the hydrocarbons have soaked into the plastic, the pipe itself will continue to leach oil into the supply and will not go away by flushing the water.

Barrier pipes are designed to be laid within contaminated land and are commonly used for brownfield site development. The plastic pipe contains a layer of metal foil (not in contact with the water) that prevents contaminants passing through the wall of the pipe and affecting the drinking water within.
- 3 Soil contaminated by oil may need to be removed as the contaminant will not go away on its own. You should contact your insurers or a private environmental company to arrange this.
(Dying vegetation can sometimes be a sign of oil contamination. Ground contaminants will affect their roots and potentially be absorbed by the plant.)
- 4 If there has been a fuel spill, contact the environmental health team at your local council as soon as possible to try and prevent further damage.
- 5 If the fuel has entered or is at risk of entering a water course, contact the Environment Agency immediately via their emergency hotline.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT CONTAMINATION FROM HAPPENING?

Fuel storage tank installations must comply with regional building regulations. Visit the OFTEC (Oil Firing Technical Association) website for further details visit www.oftec.org

Having a storage tank that is bunded will help contain spills from the tank.

- ✓ Check the tank condition regularly.
- ✓ Watch deliveries of oil to your property.
- ✓ Check taps and other fittings are not damaged or leaking.
- ✓ Monitor the oil level of the tank regularly.
- ✓ Have a qualified professional inspect the tank and heating system every year.
- ✓ Place the tank in a hidden and/or secure location to prevent theft of oil that could lead to a spill.

For all new supply connections where there is oil storage or contaminated land at the premises, the water service pipe must be laid in a barrier pipe material. We will not connect your water supply pipe to our mains if it is not the correct material.

When laying oil and water pipes, never lay them within the same trench or duct. There must be an absolute minimum of 350mm between different service pipes and any water pipe.

Consider where the oil deliver tanker and other vehicles will be parked. There have been incidents where oil has leaked from vehicles on driveways and subsequently permeated the supply pipe and contaminated the drinking water.

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