



NEWS RELEASE

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Winter rush for heating oil

Industry Trade Body, the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers (FPS), which represents the majority of oil distribution companies in Great Britain, has receiving a number of calls from the general public about getting heating oil delivered urgently and so is issuing some advice.

The FPS has already achieved a relaxation of the regulations governing the number of hours the fuel delivery drivers can work, which is a help, but the adverse weather conditions have made fuel deliveries difficult and the low temperatures have pushed orders for heating oil to at least twice the seasonal norm. Many customers have let the levels in their heating oil tanks run down to a critical level over the summer and so are now desperate for oil.

FPS advice is:

- Be patient – trust your regular supplier. Tell them when you will run out so that they can prioritise.
- Explain your circumstances honestly. Last winter, a number of customers who told their supplier they had run out actually had plenty of oil when the delivery tanker arrived. This makes things worse for those who have genuinely run out.
- Don't try to bully or be rude to your supplier's telesales staff. They are doing their best to help everyone get the oil they need.

Chief Executive of the FPS, Susan Hancock comments: "The weather is playing a major part in the current backlog on deliveries. The tanker drivers are really putting themselves out to get supply to as many people as possible in the difficult conditions, but we must be mindful of their safety. They deserve praise for their efforts that often go above the call of duty."



The FPS and its members have also, over the last few months, been running a campaign to educate people to think ahead, order oil early and be prepared for bad weather situations.

Susan adds: “We must emphasise that customers need to think about ordering early each year before the bad weather hits. Suppliers are usually less busy in this period and able to offer better value than in the peak periods of December, January and February. This advice has certainly paid off this winter!

It would also help to ease the situation if customers who currently have a good supply of oil in their tanks delay until the current backlog of orders has been dealt with rather than order a top-up of their tank at the moment, when they don't really need it.

Some customers have commented on the recent rise in the price of heating oil. Crude is now at its highest price since October 2008. This, together with the more difficult delivery conditions reducing productivity, has helped to push prices up. Oil prices change on a daily basis and the backlog of orders means that distributors are having to factor in continuation of the rising price trend when they give guide prices for more than a day or two in advance.

Our members understand that times are hard financially and people may feel they have to wait until they can afford it before ordering fuel, but a lot of oil distributors run payment schemes. These schemes enable customers to have bigger, less frequent deliveries but then spread the payments out over the whole year, helping both financially and ensuring homeowners don't run out of fuel when the bad weather hits hard.”

For people wanting to find their nearest oil distributor the FPS has set up a special area on its website www.fpsonline.co.uk for consumers to easily find their nearest supplier.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Federation of Petroleum Suppliers (FPS) represents the majority of oil distribution companies in Great Britain, who are, in the main, small family businesses responsible for deliveries of almost all the home heating oil used in Great Britain, in addition to marine, agricultural, commercial, industrial and forecourt deliveries. There are currently over 180 members of the FPS across the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.