

# Oil Spill for a Food Manufacturer

CASE STUDY

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## Oil Spill for a Food Manufacturer

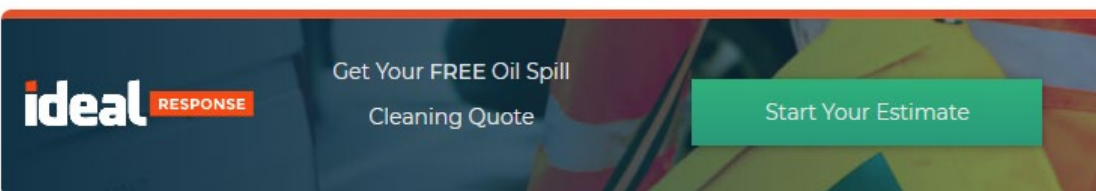
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### THE CHALLENGE

In food manufacturing, a great deal of oil is used during production, and it must be stored carefully according to regulations. For our client, a major producer of condiments such as lemon curd, marmalade, chutney, sauces and salad dressings for the UK's largest supermarkets, this requires significant bulk storage.

The condiment company stores ingredients such as cooking oil, vinegar, and water in 5,000-liter outdoor storage tankers, using a 'bund' which is essentially an area used to capture leaks or spills which might otherwise go unnoticed. Oil spillages on the floor and surrounding area can be caused by overfilling the tankers, or by leaks in the tankers themselves. If left unchecked, these oil spillages could have implications for the environment and for the safety of food production in the company's nearby facilities.

Our client had two issues: one of the 8 tankers was leaking into the bund, and a sump pump on one of the tankers had failed. The challenge for the Ideal Response team was to professionally clean spillage of waste oil from the whole area, solve the sump pump problem, and time the work so that we could also clean the inside of the storage tankers when they were empty.



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### THE IDEAL SOLUTION

We had performed the same oil spill clean up in Newbury two years ago for the client and due to the high level of work we provided, the client immediately came back to Ideal Response when the situation arose again.

The area and extent of cleaning work required was significant, spanning a floor area, drain gulleys, 8 large oil tankers, pathways to those tankers and surrounding concrete walls of some 20 metres in length. In the area where the sump pump was located, leaves, twigs and debris from trees had clogged the pump, so we brought our own sump plug in order to safely drain the bund which was

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half full of excess water, oil, spillages, etc. The gulley also required clearing and cleaning to a depth of around 2 feet to allow adequate oil flow.

Two Ideal Response teams were required for the cleaning process and the safe removal and disposal of an estimated 3-5,000 litres of sludge (a combination of cooking oil, rain water and vinegar) using numerous Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs).

Over the course of 10 days with 3-4 Ideal professionals on-site at any one time, we cleaned the length of the 8 tankers in their entirety, and all of the surrounding area affected by oil spillages. We used a combination of 'wet vac' vacuum equipment and DOFF steam cleaning, plus high pressure temperature jetters to clean the tankers, floors and the concrete walls.

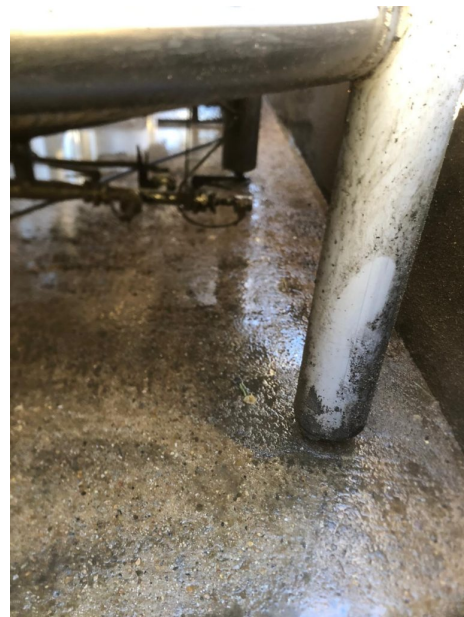
The oil spill clean up in Newbury was once again a success, and talks are underway to determine if this should be a bi-annual project for Ideal Response.

### THE CAUSES AND EFFECT OF OIL SPILLS

While spills of petroleum products are well known as being dangerous and toxic, careless disposal of vegetable and other edible oils, fats and waste sludge can also have a significant effect on the environment.

In the UK every year there are approximately 200,000 sewer blockages of which up to 75% are caused by fat, oil and grease. Businesses such as restaurants and industrial food manufacturers also run the risk of blocking their own drainage systems, which results in extra costs to the business.

Typical causes of oil spills include storage or waste tanks which are poorly maintained; spillages during delivery; or the deliberate disposal of waste oil into drainage systems. Even a small quantity of oil can cause a lot of harm – oil which spills into drainage systems, onto land or into watercourses can cause pollution in streams and rivers and be harmful to birds, fish, other wildlife and our environment. Oil spills can also be dangerous when they occur close to food processing establishments due to contamination issues.



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The food industry is governed by environmental and waste laws, and The Environmental Protection Act 1990 makes it a duty for any person who imports, produces, carries, keeps, treats or disposes of controlled waste to do it safely. This includes waste cooking oils and fats, and offenders who break these waste laws can be punished by a fine or prison term.

When oil spills occur, they are often identified by rancid odours, the pollution of ground surfaces or by waste contractors who identify the issue. The Ideal Response team can provide further support and advice if you believe you have an oil spill issue.

### THE TECHNICAL BIT

Our team used a number of different cleaning systems to ensure a thorough oil spill clean up in Newbury. As well as the sump pump for drainage, our 'wet vac' industrial-strength vacuum equipment was essential for absorbing the remaining sludge and water in the bund for removal.

Due to limited space under the tankers, we were not able to get completely beneath to clean, so in this case we used a high pressure jetter to force all the water, sludge and debris to one end of the bund, where we could then use the wet vac to absorb all of the remaining water and sludge.

For the tankers themselves and the surrounding concrete walls, we used our DOFF System which is a steam-based cleaning method. Since this does not use a chemical biocide during the course of the treatment, it is an environmentally friendly cleaning solution and well suited for use on brickwork and steel containers. In particular, by increasing the temperature of the steam – which can reach up to 150°C at the nozzle end – the DOFF System can make light work of removing different types of biological matter, in this case, oils. The combination of high-temperature steam and low pressure also means that the surface being cleaned will be dry in minutes, so brick or stone does not become saturated.

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Normally, for tankers of this size we would use mobile towers to clean the whole of the tanks, but due to limited space and health and safety reasons we were unable to, which made the oil spill clean more challenging. However, with the right equipment, right protective gear, and right skills, the Ideal team ensured that the food condiment manufacturer can continue to create fine foods while knowing that oil leaks or spills are not an operational issue.

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