Choosing a Diesel Tank for Temporary Power and Fuel Needs

When a permanent fuel system does not make sense

Construction sites, agricultural operations, and emergency response efforts often require fuel on site for days or weeks at a time. Installing a permanent underground tank is expensive, requires permits, and ties fuel storage to one location. For short-term projects or seasonal demand, a temporary tank offers flexibility without long-term commitment. Understanding what to look for in a diesel fuel tank rental helps you match the equipment to the job, avoid downtime, and keep fuel secure.

Why a temporary tank instead of a permanent install

Permanent tanks involve excavation, concrete work, corrosion protection, and regulatory approvals that can take months. If your project runs for a few weeks or a single season, a temporary above-ground tank makes more sense. You can place it near the equipment being fueled, move it when the job moves, and return it when you are done. The cost of a diesel fuel tank rental is predictable and does not tie up capital in infrastructure you may never need again.

Another reason to rent is to test a fuel strategy before committing. If you are expanding a fleet or trying a new fuel type, a temporary setup lets you measure consumption and logistics without buying a tank you might later sell. Once the trial period ends, you can decide whether a permanent tank is justified or whether seasonal rentals work better year after year.

Types of tanks available for short-term use

Most rental tanks are made from heavy-duty steel or cross-linked polyethylene. Steel tanks handle rough handling and are often used on construction sites where equipment might bump into them. Poly tanks are lighter, resist corrosion, and work well for farms or sites where rust from condensation could be a problem.

View the location on Google Maps

Double-wall containment is standard on modern rental tanks. The inner wall holds the fuel, and the outer wall catches any leak from the inner wall. This design eliminates the need for a separate secondary containment structure like a concrete dike. Many rental tanks also include a spill bucket around the fill connection and a lockable cap to prevent theft or tampering.

Capacities typically range from 100 gallons up to 10,000 gallons. A small generator might run for a day on a 100-gallon tank, while a fleet of heavy trucks might need a 1,000-gallon or larger tank. Rental companies usually offer several sizes so you can match the tank to your daily fuel use without overpaying for capacity you will not fill.

Pumping and dispensing options

A tank without a pump is just a container. Most rental tanks include a pump, a filter, and a hose for dispensing fuel. Manual hand pumps work for small tanks and low volumes, but electric or battery-powered pumps are more common for medium and large tanks. Some pumps run on 12-volt DC power, which lets you connect them to a vehicle battery or a solar panel. Others need 120-volt AC power and a generator or shore power.

Flow meters on the dispenser let you track how much fuel goes into each piece of equipment. This detail matters for job costing, tax records, and spotting fuel theft. Without a meter, you rely on dip-stick readings, which are less accurate and harder to reconcile with receipts.

Filters are easy to overlook but critical. Diesel fuel can pick up water and dirt during transport or storage, especially if the tank is filled from a bulk truck that serves many customers. A good filter with a water separator keeps contaminants out of your engine injectors. Some rental tanks come with a filter that has a clear bowl so you can see if water has collected and drain it before it reaches the equipment.

What to check before signing the rental agreement

Not all rental tanks are the same quality. Before you commit, ask about the age and condition of the tank. A rusty tank or one with cracked fittings can leak fuel and cause environmental damage that you are legally responsible for. Ask whether the tank has been pressure tested recently and whether the pump and filter have been serviced.

Fuel theft is a real concern on open job sites. Look for a tank that can be locked with a padlock or has a built-in locking cap. Some rental tanks also have a locking pump handle that prevents unauthorized dispensing. For sites with multiple shifts or sub-contractors, a lockable pump box adds another layer of control.

Delivery logistics matter too. The rental company should be able to deliver the tank to your site on a flatbed truck or trailer. Check whether the tank comes empty or with a small amount of fuel for startup. You will also need to arrange for fuel delivery to refill the tank. Some rental companies offer both the tank and the fuel delivery as a package, which simplifies coordination.

Compliance and paperwork

Storing diesel fuel above ground is regulated by federal and state agencies. The environmental protection agency and local fire marshals set rules for tank placement, containment, and record keeping. A rental tank with double-wall construction and a spill bucket usually meets the basic requirements for temporary storage, but you should confirm with your local authority before the tank arrives.

Some states require a permit for any tank larger than a certain size, even if it is temporary. Others exempt tanks used for less than 90 or 180 days. Know the rules in your state and county. The rental company can often tell you what regulations apply and may even provide the required paperwork or inspection reports.

Spill response planning is part of compliance. You need to have absorbent materials on site in case of a leak, and you should know who to call if a spill reaches soil or water. Many rental companies include a spill kit with the tank and brief you on basic procedures. Do not skip that briefing.

Returning the tank and closing out the rental

When the project ends, the tank must be cleaned and returned. Most rental agreements require you to return the tank with only a small amount of residual fuel. You are usually responsible for removing the fuel from the tank and disposing of it properly, unless the rental company offers a pickup service that includes fuel removal.

Inspect the tank for damage before it leaves your site. Dents, scratches, or broken fittings can lead to repair charges. Take photos when the tank arrives and again when it leaves so you have a record of its condition.

American Energy Supply, Co. at 1704 Chichester Ave, Linwood, PA 19061 can be reached at (610) 494-4874 for fuel delivery and tank rental needs across Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. Their team can help match a tank size and pump configuration to your specific project timeline.