



OSHA Training Toolbox Talk

Safety While Refueling Vehicles and Equipment

There are some “no-brainer” safety rules to observe while refueling a vehicle or other piece of equipment at work or at home. But there are also some rules that are not so obvious. Here is an overview of some of the precautions that you should keep in mind anytime you are refueling a vehicle or piece of equipment.

- **NO SMOKING!** (Duh). The burning cigarette can ignite flammable vapors that are emitted from the liquid fuel, causing a flash fire or explosion to occur. Also make certain there are no other potential sources of ignition, such as open flames or spark-producing equipment operating in the area, as they too can ignite a fire or explosion;
- **Only use safety cans or other approved portable fuel containers**, such as those marked as D.O.T. approved for transporting and transferring fuels, to refuel vehicles and equipment. Unapproved containers can easily leak, spill fuel, or even rupture, leading to a potentially dangerous situation;
- **Always kill the engine of the vehicle or equipment before you refuel.** Also, be certain to let portable equipment such as lawn mowers, generators, chain saws, blowers, trimmers, or anything else with a fuel-powered engine cool down before you add fuel to the tank. Spilling liquid fuel on a hot motor instantly creates a cloud of highly flammable vapor, which can easily catch fire or explode;
- **Before dispensing fuel into your car or truck, be sure to touch a metal part away from the fuel tank on your vehicle or equipment with your bare hand.** This helps dissipate any static build-up on your body created when you slid out of your vehicle. Also, touch the gas dispenser nozzle or hose to the fill tube on the gas tank before you start to add fuel to the tank, and keep it in contact throughout the entire refueling process. This step helps prevent hazardous static electricity from building up and causing a spark in the vapor area as you refuel;
- **Never dispense fuel into a can or other portable container while it is sitting in your vehicle truck or truck bed.** Doing so allows hazardous static electricity to build up. Instead, sit the container on the ground and then add the fuel;