



Toolbox Talks

Spotlight on Safety



Handling Gasoline And Flammable Liquids

Flammable liquids can get you in trouble. They can ignite and explode, which can injure or kill. When properly stored and handled, they can be safe to use.

Before handling flammable liquids, know how to do it safely. You should always know if the material you are handling is flammable. Obviously gasoline is highly flammable, but what about the paint solvent, part cleaner, or other hazardous liquids on your jobsite? To determine if a chemical is flammable, read the label on the original container or check the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). If the material is flammable, follow these simple procedures:

- ▲ Store all flammable materials in their original containers or in approved flammable liquid storage cans. Never handle chemicals stored in unapproved containers.
- ▲ Label all containers to identify what is stored in the container. Even the red gasoline cans found so often at jobsites should be labeled because the same color and type of containers are used for other types of flammable liquids.
- ▲ Equip all flammable liquid storage cans with self-closing lids. This will ensure that the container is closed, preventing the evaporation of the liquid into the environment, which could cause a fire or explosion.
- ▲ Equip the nozzle on every approved flammable container with a flash arrester, which is a copper screen inside the nozzle. Its purpose is to prevent a flash-back into the container if the flammable liquid you are pouring is exposed to a spark.
- ▲ Ground all storage drums, such as tanks and 55-gal. containers.
- ▲ Bond all receiving containers to the dispensing container to prevent static electricity buildup and discharge, which could cause an explosion.
- ▲ Never fill storage cans in the back of pickup trucks or other vehicles. Always remove them from the vehicle and place them on the ground or drip tray when filling.
- ▲ Do not smoke in areas where flammable liquids are used or stored.
- ▲ Do not permit open flames in any area where flammable liquids are used or stored. Open flames include, but are not limited to, lighters, torches, heaters, burners, grinders.
- ▲ Clean up immediately with chemical absorbents, kitty litter, or rags all spills or leaks involving flammable liquids. Materials or rags used to clean up spills are fire hazards and should be placed in proper metal waste containers and disposed of properly. Ask your foreman about disposal requirements at your jobsite.
- ▲ Store flammable liquids in well-ventilated areas away from oxygen cylinders, oxidizing chemicals, and sources of ignition.
- ▲ Make sure you know where the fire extinguisher is located and know how to use it. Never attempt to use a fire extinguisher to put out a fire unless you have been trained in how to use it. Selecting the wrong extinguisher or using it incorrectly can spread the fire or cause you harm.

Flammable liquids can be dangerous if not handled properly. Know how to use them safely.

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