



OHSA Training Toolbox Talk #05

Refuelling

Internal combustion engines all run on some type of fuel. Take a look around the construction site. What do you see? You will most probably find:

- Portable generators
- Water pumps
- Air compressors
- Chain saws
- Cut-off saws.
- Pickup trucks
- Dump trucks
- Flat bed trucks
- Bulldozers
- Cranes

... the list could go on and on depending on the size of the job.

Always remember that when you are refuelling you're dealing with flammable liquids which form vapours that can easily catch fire or explode.

- The golden rule is: Never Smoke Around Flammable Liquids. Put all smoking materials out well in advance of any refuelling and remind co-workers to do the same.
- The second rule to remember is to let the engine cool off before you start the refuelling. This is hard to do because the engine always seems to run out of fuel in the middle of what you are trying to get done, but a hot engine and flammables may cause a flash fire or explosion. A few minutes to let the engine cool down could prevent serious injury or even a fatality.



When dispensing flammable liquids:

- Use only approved storage containers. Use a safety can to store flammables. Never use glass bottles or plastic milk jugs - they are not approved. The container should have a self-closing lid and a label describing the contents.
- When dispensing from large storage tanks or at a fuel pump, the same safety rules apply. Shut the motor off prior to filling the fuel tank.

As a construction worker you have many pieces of equipment that require the use of flammable liquids. Practice fuel safety at all times (both on and off the job). Follow all your employer's rules and report fuel spills to your supervisor immediately. Know where the fire extinguishers are located (try to have one with you while refuelling) and how to use the extinguisher correctly. Your life may depend on it!

Remember:

Make sure that the area is well ventilated before dispensing any flammable liquid.

