Workplace Safety

Safety Fuel Containers: 5 Things You Should Never Do When Pouring Gasoline

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We use safety gas cans at home, in the workplace and on job sites. Not all fuel containers are created equal. Industrial safety cans have features like flame arresters and pressure relief valves. Their design helps prevent incidents. Yet, simply using a safety gas can won't guarantee your safety. Applying best safety practices is also key.

Pouring gasoline from a safety can into a lawnmower or other equipment is so common that we don't even think about it. But, the consequences of something going wrong are quite severe. Equipment damage, fire, injury and even death may result when being too casual using gasoline and other flammable liquids.

Here are 5 tips when pouring gasoline:

Safety Gas Can Tip 1:

Never assume the volume you are pouring is too small to cause any problems

Bypassing safe practices because they would take too long is asking for trouble. For example, make sure the safety can is electrically bonded to the receiving equipment. A static electricity spark can cause ignition even when pouring a small amount of gasoline.

Safety Gas Can Tip 2:

Don't assume that gasoline needs a flame to ignite

In 2011, ***a California automotive mechanic lost his life after replacing the gas tank of a vehicle***. While pouring gasoline into the new tank using a bucket, he spilled some fuel onto an incandescent light. The heat from the bulb ignited the gasoline, engulfing the mechanic in flames. Be observant and check your

work area for any source of ignition and always use an approved safety gas can.

Safety Gas Can Tip 3:

Never, ever pour gasoline onto a fire

And never use gasoline or gas-powered equipment near an open flame. What should have been a routine repair to a logging machine turned into a ***fatal accident for one field mechanic in Oregon when he attempted to stoke a warming fire by pouring gas on it***. The gas fumes ignited and flashed back into his 5-gallon container, causing an explosion. The heat from the fire can also cause a buildup in pressure, causing a release of liquid gasoline from the gas can. Inspect your flame arrester regularly. This safety device helps prevent flames from reaching the fuel container contents.

Safety Gas Can Tip 4:

Do not change the material stored in a safety can without changing the label

Anyone picking up the fuel container will assume that the contents and the label match. Pouring the wrong fuel into a piece of equipment could lead to expensive repairs. But, this does not compare to the risks of fire and injury due to using the wrong fuel for the task. Keep labels clear and up to date with the contents of a safety can.

Safety Gas Can Tip 5:

Don’t rely on your aim – use a funnel when pouring from a Type I safety can

Spilling a little gas onto lawnmowers and other equipment may not cause immediate problems. But, as the equipment heats up under normal use, the gasoline may ignite. Fuel belongs in a safety gas can or in the gas tank of the equipment – not anywhere on the surface or hidden in a crevice of the machine. Use a funnel when pouring to eliminate the chance of spills.

Unsafe work practices lead to fires and injuries. The first step to avoiding this is ***buying an approved fuel container with multiple safety features***. Justrite safety gas cans feature flame arrestors and spring-loaded caps. They relieve pressure in the case of overheating. Their handles and bases are ergonomically designed to promote safe handling.

References:

California Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation Program. ***An Automotive Mechanic Dies from Thermal Burns when the Gasoline He was Pouring into a Vehicle Ignited***

Oregon Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation. ***Mechanic killed pouring gasoline on fire***

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