

TOOLBOX TALK · FIRE

Refuelling

About 7 minutes to deliver

Engine off, cool, on the ground, nozzle touching — the four things people skip because it is only going to take a minute.

Refuelling is a two-minute job that happens several times a day, which is exactly why the shortcuts creep in. Almost every fuel fire on a site starts at one of four skipped steps.

ENGINE OFF

Every time. 1910.178(p)(2) puts it in the standard for forklifts and the reason applies to everything: fuel tanks shall not be filled while the engine is running.

- Off, and out of gear, brake on.
- Let it cool. Petrol on a hot exhaust manifold or a hot muffler ignites without any spark at all. Two-stroke tools — chainsaws, cut-off saws, blowers, plate compactors — are the worst for this because they run hot and get refuelled constantly. Give it a few minutes.
- No smoking, no phone, no hot work, no grinding anywhere near. And "near" means further than it feels, because the vapour travels.

ON THE GROUND

Static electricity is the ignition source people forget.

- Portable containers go on the ground to be filled, never in a truck bed and never on a plastic bed liner. The liner insulates the can, the charge from the flowing fuel builds with nowhere to go, and it discharges at the filler neck where the vapour is.
- Keep the nozzle in contact with the fill opening the whole time. Metal to metal is the bond.
- Do not get back in the vehicle while fuelling. Sliding across a seat builds a charge on you, and you discharge it at the nozzle when you come back to it.
- 1926.152(e)(2): transferring flammable liquid between containers is done only when the containers are bonded.

APPROVED CONTAINERS

- Safety cans with self-closing lids, flame arresters and proper spouts, labelled for what is in them.
- Never a water jug, a soda bottle, or an unmarked pail. Somebody will drink it or put it in the wrong machine, and both have happened.
- Do not overfill. Fuel expands, and a can filled to the brim in the morning is venting by the afternoon.
- Lids on and secured for transport, upright, ventilated, never in a sealed passenger space.

SPILLS

- Stop, and do not start anything. No engines, no switches, no phones.
- Absorb it and bag the absorbent as hazardous waste. Never hose it down or wash it to a drain.
- Change your clothes if you get fuel on them. Fuel-soaked clothing ignites easily and holds the vapour against your skin, and diesel and petrol both burn skin on long contact.
- Know where the extinguisher is before you start — Class B, and know you have seconds.

AND THE EVERYDAY ONE

Right fuel in the right machine. Putting petrol in a diesel or mixed fuel in a four-stroke costs an engine at best, and at worst somebody works on a machine that then behaves in a way nobody expects.

ASK THE CREW

- Where do we fill cans — in the truck bed or on the ground?
- Does anyone refuel a saw or a cut-off without letting it cool?
- Is there a Class B extinguisher near where we fuel?

29 CFR 1926.152 · 29 CFR 1910.178

This is a toolbox talk, not a course. It is general awareness on one topic — not site-specific, not a hazard assessment, and not a substitute for assessment of your workplace by a competent person, your written programs, or manufacturers' instructions. It does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. Regulations change; verify against the current standard. Whoever delivers it is responsible for deciding it is suitable and sufficient for the work. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, not a substitute for professional medical care or certified emergency-response training, and it confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. Migna Safety Solutions · training.mignasafety.com

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Refuelling

About 7 minutes to deliver · 29 CFR 1926.152 · 29 CFR 1910.178

Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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