



SAFETY ALERT

OF THE MONTH

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION

Fuel Handling Safety

AOM# 2020-11-20

Handling fuel is common across all sectors in forestry. Examples include fueling equipment with diesel, putting gas in a chainsaw or using a propane torch in cold weather. Consider these useful tips to help prevent fuel incidents:

Fuel Safety Tips

1. **Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – When handling fuel, wear coated gloves that repel liquids such as nitrile or PVC gloves. Wear appropriate eye protection to prevent fuel from splashing in your eyes.
2. **Remove ignition sources** – A lit cigarette, hot engine or a spark from static electricity can all ignite fuel vapours. Before fueling, pause and assess your surroundings.
3. **Use proper containers** – Use suitable fuel containers and portable tanks built to the proper CSA or ULC standards. If burning piles, use drip torches and never pour fuel directly onto an open fire. Place portable containers on the ground when filling to avoid static buildup.
4. **Proper Labels and Safety Data Sheets** – Check every container and tank and ensure they have the correct labels. Have Safety Data Sheets available in case of a fire or first aid emergency as they provide vital details and instructions on correctly handling these situations.
5. **Avoid fuel fumes** – Many fuels contain hazardous chemicals that are harmful when inhaled. Ensure there is good ventilation when handling fuel.
6. **Stop spills** – Spills can be a fire hazard and cause environmental damage. It may be tempting to do other tasks when fueling up but it is essential to stay put and be ready to stop fueling. Examine fuel spill kits and ensure they are fully stocked, prepped and ready to go.
7. **Propane** – Propane is colourless and heavier than air. If there is a leak, it can pool in lower areas and can be easy to miss. Propane typically contains an additive to purposely smell like rotten eggs - so be familiar with the smell as this can be your best way to detect a leak.





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8. **Handling Barrels and Tanks** – Moving large containers of flammable products is risky. Make sure to get assistance moving heavy containers and use equipment to lift and control containers. Liquid sloshing around in partially full containers can make them difficult to control.
9. **Get Trained** – Any workplace using hazardous materials (including fuel) must train workers to understand the hazards and know how to work safely with the products. Training should include how to understand the labels, what the information on a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) means, how to handle, use and dispose of hazardous products, and what to do if something goes wrong. In addition, if workers are required to transport hazardous materials, they must also be trained in the transportation of dangerous goods.
10. **Transporting Dangerous Goods** – When transporting fuel, understand and follow all federal and provincial guidelines. Fuel must be properly labelled, placarded and secured before transporting. A course in the transportation of dangerous goods is a great option to learn the guidelines, restrictions and safety protocols.

Additional Resources

- 2020 BC Fuel Guidelines – Industry standards for fuel storage, handling and transportation - www.fuelmanagement.ca/bc-fuel-guidelines
- Fuel Geyser Awareness Video - www.nwccg.gov/committees/equipment-technology-committee/national-fuel-geyser-awareness
- How Do I Work Safely with - Flammable and Combustible Liquids Fact Sheet from CCOHS - www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/prevention/flammable_general.html

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Disclaimer: We encourage the sharing of information that can help improve safety for all workers.



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