



Working Safely with Fuels and Oils

Maintaining equipment and vehicles in a good condition is important to the Health and Safety of those that use them and others around. Unfortunately, the fuels and oils etc. that are used to maintain them and keep them running come with their own hazards and therefore need to be handled with care

Main Points

The main hazards associated with the use of fuels & oils are:-

- Dermatitis or cancer from contact with fuels/oil;
- Fire and explosion
- Injection of high pressure oil or fuel into the body
- Slips and falls on contaminated floors
- Manual handling of containers
- Environmental hazards can be caused from spillages or incorrect disposal of used oils

You can reduce the chance of an accident or ill health by following these guidelines:-

- Only work with hazardous substances, including fuels and oils if you have been authorised and trained in their safe use, handling and storage
- Ensure you have received training prior to working on machinery with high pressure hydraulic systems and diesel injection systems etc
- Always read and follow the label or the Manufacturer's Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDA) for the fuels/oils you are using

- Follow directions for proper use, storage and disposal including containers
- Take care when lifting/handling fuel or oil containers, ask for help rather than attempting to lift heavy weights
- Make sure fuel containers are in good condition, are clearly labelled, have securely fitting caps and an auto filler spout to reduce spillage.

Make sure, if you do transfer the fuel/oil into another container that:-

- The container is suitable for the fuel/oil
- The container is clean
- You label the container clearly indicating the new contents and their hazard label
- Wear flame resistant overalls if carrying out machinery maintenance operations
- Remove overalls contaminated with petrol immediately obtain a fresh pair – contaminated overalls may be ignited by work activities such as welding operations
- Always wear suitable PVC protective gloves when handling or otherwise coming into contact with fuels /oils, including waste oils.
- Use barrier creams to protect your skin
- Wear suitable boots with slip resistant soles and suitable eye protection if there is a risk or splash
- Remove containers of fuel from areas where hot work e.g. welding, cutting, grinding is taking place.
- Carry out all fuel system work etc in well ventilated areas well away from pits or other openings in the ground
- Have suitable fire extinguishers close to hand, know where they are positioned and the types of fire they can be used on.
- Use funnels or spouts to help avoid spillage.
- Ensure re-fuelling is carried out in a well-ventilated area, away from sources of ignition, eg smoking
- Allow equipment/vehicle components to cool before working on them e.g. when refuelling or changing engine oil etc

Never search for a high pressure oil/diesel leak with bare hands, use a piece of card!

Talk to Atlas about Safety Management for your business

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