

Toolbox Talk # 4.03 – Flammable and Combustible Liquids

A 'Flammable Liquid' is defined as any liquid having a flash point below 140°F and having a vapor pressure not exceeding 40 psia at 100°F. A liquid with a flash point at or above 140°F (60°C) and below 200°F (93.4°C) is a 'Combustible Liquid'. You will find both of these liquids on most construction sites. Two of the most common liquids we use are gasoline and diesel fuel. Each has a flash point of less than 140°F and therefore is classified as a flammable liquid. For easy reference -- the flash point of a liquid is the temperature at which it gives off sufficient vapor to form an ignitable mixture with air, near the surface of the liquid or within a vessel.

Here are a few safety guidelines that you should remember when handling flammable or combustible liquids. Store and handle them in APPROVED containers. NEVER smoke around these liquids. Post 'NO SMOKING' signs on liquid petroleum tanks. While in storage, fuel gas cylinders and oxygen cylinders must be separated by a minimum distance of 20 feet, or with fire resistant barriers. Fuel storage tanks must be guarded to prevent damage from vehicular traffic. Fire extinguishers need to be properly distributed around the worksite and kept free from obstructions.

Are you trained in the use of each type of extinguisher? Do you use safety cans when dispensing flammable and combustible liquids? Do you have a plan to clean up spills properly and promptly? Plastic milk cartons and glass bottles are not approved containers for these liquids. Are all flammable or combustible liquids you use in approved, closed containers when not in use?

OSHA requirements state "no more than 25 gallons of flammable or combustible liquids shall be stored in a room outside of an approved storage cabinet." Further, "no more than 60 gallons of flammable or 120 gallons of combustible liquids shall be stored in any one storage cabinet. Not more than three such cabinets may be located in a single storage area." Does storage of these liquids on your jobsite measure up?

- In closing, flammable and combustible liquids can be used safely. If you follow the guidelines above no problems should arise -- if you don't, you may go up in smoke!

Toolbox Talk # 4.03 – Flammable and Combustible Liquids

Project: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Company: _____

Other safety issues covered or comments from crew members:

Attendees:

Name: (please print)	Signature:	Company:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		