

SAFETY ALERT!



Fire hazard from static electricity when handling flammable liquids

The purpose of this safety alert is to:

- Inform people about the danger of igniting flammable liquids by static electricity.
- Provide guidance on how to control static electricity when filling containers with flammable liquid at service stations.

Background

The owner of a car held a can while filling it with petrol, and the car caught fire.

The person was not injured, but the car was destroyed.

The can that was held in the man's hand was not earthed. This caused a discharge of static electricity that ignited the vapours from the petrol, causing the fire.

Contributing factors

- Dispensing petrol creates a hazardous atmosphere around the dispenser by releasing flammable vapours.
- Flowing flammable liquids can generate a static electricity discharge. Sparks, resulting from the discharge, can ignite the vapours from the flammable liquids.
- Although there are other sources of ignition in a workplace, static electricity is particularly risky because it is often not 'visible' or well understood by people.

Action Required

- Use proper earthing and bonding to control static electricity.
- Always place the fuel container on the ground before filling it with flammable liquid.
- Never fill a container in the boot of a car, in the tray, or on the tailgate of a utility truck.
- Never use unapproved containers to store fuel.
- Do not fill containers with a capacity greater than 25 litres.
- Reduce splash filling as much as possible.
- Always read and obey the signs at service stations that state the need to place a fuel container on the ground when filling it.

- FREE download of Safety Awareness Posters - www.makrosafe.co.za
- FREE download of this Safety Alert - www.makrosafe.co.za
- ACCREDITED Training Provider - Forklift; Overhead Crane; First Aid; OHS Legislation
- SAVE money - Let us manage all areas of your IOD.

