

safety matters

Construction

Toolbox Talks

From your safety partners at Crendon Insurance Brokers Limited

Working With Flammable and Combustible Liquids

Flammable and combustible liquids are present at many worksites in the construction industry. Petrol, diesel fuel, and many common products such as solvents, thinners, cleaners, adhesives, paints, waxes and polishes may be highly flammable or combustible. And if used or stored improperly, these types of liquids can cause serious injury or death.

To understand the dangers of flammable and combustible liquids, it is important to know that it is the vapour, not the liquid, which burns. For instance, an explosion can occur when a worker drains a diesel tank and begins repairs involving welding or brazing on the tank. Although the tank is empty, it contains diesel vapour. If the vapour concentration is within the explosive range and a source of ignition is introduced, an explosion can easily occur.

General Safety Rules

The following work practices must be followed when handling flammable and combustible liquids at the worksite:

- Do not use flammable liquids around open flames or when another ignition source is in the path of the vapour.
- All containers must be properly labelled and marked with the complete chemical name.
- All containers must be metal, sealed with a cap or lid and not damaged or leaking.
- Don't store flammable liquid containers next to exits, aisles, stairways or doors – even for a brief time. Flammable containers may also not be placed where they can interfere

with the exit from an area or building site in an emergency situation.

- Dispense flammable and combustible liquids with approved pump or metal self-closing taps only.
- Do not transfer liquid unless a worker who is trained to stop the transfer in the event of a spill is present.
- When transferring flammable liquids from one container to another, the two containers must be connected by a conducting wire and one container must be earthed.
- Remember that welding, flame cutting and soldering, and other flame-, heat- or spark-producing work is not allowed within 7.5 metres of liquid use and storage areas.
- Never smoke in storage and handling areas of combustible and flammable liquids, or in a 7.5-metre radius around these areas.
- Maintain access to fire extinguishers and other emergency response equipment at all times. At least one fire extinguisher must be located within three metres of any flammable and/or combustible liquid storage area, and within 15 metres of a flammable liquid use area.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the safe handling of these liquids, contact your supervisor.

Follow these general safety rules when handling and storing flammable and combustible liquids.



**Crendon
Insurance
Brokers**

The content of this document is of general interest and is not intended to apply to specific circumstances. It does not purport to be a comprehensive analysis of all matters relevant to its subject matter. The content should not, therefore, be regarded as constituting legal advice and not be relied upon as such. In relation to any particular problem which they may have, readers are advised to seek specific advice. Further, the law may have changed since first publication and the reader is cautioned accordingly.

© 2010-13 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.