

Storing and Dispensing Fuel from a Portable Container

Flammable liquid storage containers are used to limit the fuel that's available to start a fire or feed a fire that's already started. NFPA 30, Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code, published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), requires that flammable and combustible liquids be stored in approved containers. In addition, the code establishes quantity limits for various container types and liquid classes.

Metal Safety Cans

Metal safety cans have a spring-loaded, self-closing lid and spout cover, and are designed to safely relieve internal pressure when subjected to fire exposure. These cans are also equipped with a spark arrestor device and are designed to prevent leakage when bumped or dropped. Metal safety cans are limited to a maximum capacity of: 2.6 gal (10 L) of Class IA and 5.3 gal (20 L) of Class IB, Class IC, Class II, or Class III liquids.

Plastic Safety Cans

Though many plastic safety cans are listed and approved, OSHA Standards for Construction (29 CFR Part 1926) prohibits use of plastic containers on construction job sites. For general industry use, plastic containers are limited to a maximum capacity of 1.3 gal (5 L) of Class IA and 5.3 gal (20 L) of Class IB, Class IC, Class II, or Class III liquids. Though plastic containers are sometimes allowed, metal safety cans are always preferred.

Dispensing Fuel

Static electricity can provide an ignition source for a fire when pouring fuel from a safety can. When dispensing fuel you should be standing firmly on the ground (concrete or soil) with the fuel tank and metal spout in contact. Disipating any built up of static electricity before pouring should be done by touching the piece of equipment or vehicle before beginning to fill the tank.

Safety Can Checklist

- Flammable liquids used for refueling equipment are stored according to the requirements of NFPA 30, Flammable Liquids Code.
- Flammable liquids are prohibited from being stored in job-site offices and trailers.
- Portable flammable-liquid containers are equipped with emergency venting.
- Portable flammable-liquid containers are approved for use. (ie. UL)
- Materials are readily available for cleaning up spills of flammable liquids.
- Smoking is prohibited in fuel storage areas, and during the refueling process.

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