

Toolbox Talk 10 – Management of Fuels and Chemicals

What is needed?

Any procedures relevant to the management of fuels and chemicals

Estimated duration

10 - 20 minutes

The discussion

It is recognised by most people that fuel has the potential to injure, but very few people are aware of the impact it can have on the environment. Fuel can:

- Instantly kill wildlife, including fish, mice, insects and plant life
- Pollute watercourses resulting in devastating environmental impacts
- Accumulate within plants and animals and be passed onto humans via the food chain
- Accumulate over long periods of time in the ground causing a major pollution problem.

With increasingly strict legislation and policing bodies such as the Environment Agency, the polluter can be prosecuted and made to pay for the clean up and the damages caused. This can be avoided by following these guidelines:

Containers and barrels

- Care must be taken when moving or using containers / barrels containing fuel
- Do not store drums too tightly against each other so that those in the centre cannot be seen. Store all containers / barrels in such a way so as all the containers can be seen in order to inspect for any leaks
- Check that the bung is secure before moving any barrels or containers
- Ensure that all tanks, drums, containers and barrels are labelled with their contents, this is particularly important when the re-use of containers occurs
- Do not leave containers / barrels lying around where they may be struck by plant
- Do not leave containers / barrels in areas adjacent to watercourses
- Dispose of empty containers / barrels in correct waste disposal facilities as they always retain some liquid which is a potential contaminant.

Storage tanks

- Large tanks of diesel or other bulk liquids must be protected by an impermeable or lined bund, which has to be 110% capacity of the storage container
- Taps must always be contained within the bund and need to be padlocked in order to avoid any problems with spillage and vandalism
- Regularly check taps and hoses for any leakages.



Maintenance of machinery and plant

- Drip trays must be placed under plant and must be emptied on a regular basis into correct disposal facilities
- The refuelling of plant must not be carried out within 30 metres of any watercourse
- Maintenance of plant must not be carried out within 30 metres of any watercourse (Please note that 30 metres is given as a guideline for an ideal situation).

Discussion point

Undertake a practical exercise:

- Fill up a bucket of clean water and deliberately kick it over (causing a spillage)
- Let the employees take charge and allow them to deal with the incident
- Once completed, discuss if the actions were correct and that all employees followed the company guidelines.

Training register

Date

Name of attendee

Signature

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

