

SA200903 – 06/03/2009

Safe handling of Dangerous Goods at Service Stations

Purpose

To remind owners, employers and workers of their obligations under the Dangerous Goods legislation in relation to self-service fuel dispensing units, specifically the filling of portable fuel containers.



Many people use portable plastic or metal fuel containers for the fuel they may need whilst conducting their work or for use at home.

Containers used for this purpose are required to meet the specifications of Australian Standard 2906:2001 – Fuel containers – Portable – Plastics and metal. This standard covers containers for the storage and transport of fuel and fuel tanks for boats.

Containers covered by this Standard are suitable for use with leaded, unleaded and super grades of petrol, two-stroke engine fuel, and kerosene and distillate.

Fuels such as those above are Class 3 Dangerous Goods. It is an offence under the *Dangerous Goods Act* for a person involved in the handling of dangerous goods not to ensure, as far as practicable, that the goods are handled safely.

Owners, employers and workers in control of the sale or supply of fuel by means of a self-service fuel-dispensing unit shall ensure that:

- (a) Instructions for the operation of the unit are displayed on or immediately adjacent to the unit;
- (b) a person has attained the age of 18 years is appointed to control and supervise from a control point the operation of the unit at all times when it is in operation for the sale of fuel;
- (c) the person referred to in paragraph (b) is fully conversant with the operation of the units by the users, the system employed for their control, the operation of the required fire extinguishers and the hazards associated with and the safety procedures to be adopted in case of a spillage of fuel;
- (d) the control point is within 30 m of each of the units and that the operation of each unit is visible to the person in charge;
- (e) a public address system is provided so that the person in control can address every user of a unit from the control point;
- (f) a switch is provided at the control point which enables the dispensing operation of every unit to be cut off;
- (g) a telephone, connected to the public telephone system, is installed at or adjacent to the control point with telephone numbers displayed for the fire brigade and ambulance service for the area; and
- (h) the units are not able to be operated unless the person in control is on duty at the control point.

An employer also has responsibilities towards the worker under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act* both to take all reasonable steps to ensure the workers safety, and to equip the worker to do the job without danger to themselves or others.

Workers (service station attendants) also have a duty to look after their own safety and that of others.

Service station attendants should **always** check carefully that there is no danger before they authorise the petrol dispenser and during its operation.

Health and safety alert >



Where the forecourt layout of a service station gives rise to poor visibility of dispensers, additional methods of work will need to be introduced for the service station attendants. It may be necessary to delay authorisation (or to cancel the pre-authorisation) of a specific pump until a temporary obstruction to vision has moved away or instructions may be given over the public address system for the customer to move to an alternative pump.

An employer has a legal responsibility to carry out an assessment of the risks arising from the operation of the site and to take steps to eliminate or control those risks. Service station attendants should inform their employer if they identify any potentially dangerous situations that are not being controlled.

A service station attendant should receive training on the correct safety procedures for any of the tasks they are required to do. For example - Operating dispensing equipment, and recognising and reporting faults.

The employer should maintain a record of this training.

Recommendations

- each vehicle and the person using a dispenser can be seen and that the attendants view is not obstructed;
- proper procedures are followed throughout the filling operation, eg dispenser nozzles are correctly inserted, delivery hoses are not stretched or kinked and tripper latches are not wedged open;
- at filling-stations the loudspeaker system and any closed-circuit TV is working correctly;
- vehicle engines are switched off when at the dispensers;
- people under the age of 16 do not buy petrol or operate dispensers;
- no one smokes in the vicinity of the dispenser (ie in danger zones);
- no one uses portable electric/electronic equipment such as a CB radio or portable telephone;
- people wishing to fill containers with petrol use only those containers that are approved;
- portable fuel containers must be placed on the ground prior to commencing filling to ensure any static electricity accumulated in the fuel is dissipated safely.

Legislative requirements

[Workplace Health and Safety Act:](#)

Section 55
Employer's general statutory duty of care

[Workplace Health and Safety Regulations:](#)

38 Hazard identification and risk assessment
39 Risk management

[Dangerous Goods Act:](#)

Section 9
Safe handling of dangerous goods

[Dangerous Goods Regulations:](#)

215 Self-service fuel dispensing units
217 Portable fuel containers

Further information

Additional information on this issue or other safety matters is available at NT WorkSafe:

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putting safety first >

