

COMMUNITY



Gasoline Safety

Even though it is used every day, it is important to remember gasoline is an extremely flammable liquid and vapor. The fumes can ignite up to 12 feet away from a pooled source, and one gallon of gasoline equals 20 sticks of dynamite.

Unfortunately, gasoline causes a significant number of burn injuries each year. There are about 500 civilian deaths annually in the U.S. from fires related to the ignition of gasoline. About 1/4 of the patients admitted to the Community Regional Burn Center are injured in fires related to the ignition of flammable liquids.

The common causes of gasoline burns include: starting or accelerating a fire, improper storage, carburetor priming, fumes near an open flame, motor vehicle crash, refueling an engine, car or boat repair, "playing" with gas, farm work, industrial activity, sniffing or "huffing" gas as well as suicide/arson/murder.

To help prevent gasoline burns, be sure to follow these important safety tips:

1. Never use gasoline around a flame source.
2. Only use gasoline outdoors.
3. Start charcoal grills with fuels labeled as starter fluid - *never use gasoline*.
4. Make sure engines are turned off and cool before filling tanks.
5. Never siphon gasoline by mouth.
6. If gasoline is spilled on your clothes, remove them immediately and place outdoors for several days before washing to let vapors evaporate.
7. Always store the minimum amount of gas required (generally no more than a gallon).
8. If gasoline is swallowed, DO NOT induce vomiting. Seek medical attention immediately.
9. Only store in approved containers.
10. When transporting gasoline in a car, keep the container in the trunk and keep the trunk lid ajar for ventilation.

For more information about burn prevention, call University Medical Center's injury prevention educator at (559) 459-4342.