

**For Immediate Release**

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[rrenkes@pei.org](mailto:rrenkes@pei.org)**“Stop Static” and Refuel Safely with Every Fill-up**

WASHINGTON, September 23 -- The American Petroleum Institute and the Petroleum Equipment Institute announced today they are joining together beginning with National Fire Prevention Week, October 6-12, to remind motorists how to avoid potential problems with static electricity at the gas pump. The groups also are encouraging motorists to follow all safe refueling practices with every fill-up.

Fall brings cool, dry air to many parts of the country -- the typical climatic conditions when static electricity build-up is most likely to occur. Static electricity may build up when a motorist re-enters the vehicle during fueling. When the motorist then returns to the vehicle fill pipe during or at the end of refueling, the static may discharge at the fill point, potentially causing a flash fire or a small sustained fire with gasoline refueling vapors.

Static electricity-related fires at retail gasoline outlets are extremely unusual, according to API and PEI, but in rare circumstances, these incidents have caused a few injuries and property damage.

The primary way consumers can avoid static electricity problems at the gas pump is to stay outside the vehicle while refueling. It may be a temptation to get back in the car when it's cold, or for any number of reasons. But the average fill-up takes only two minutes, and staying outside the vehicle will greatly minimize the likelihood of any build-up of static electricity that could be discharged at the nozzle.

In the rare event a motorist experiences a fire when refueling, leave the nozzle in the fill pipe of your vehicle and back away from the vehicle. Notify the station attendant immediately to shut off all dispensing devices and pumps with emergency controls. If the facility is unattended, use the emergency shutdown button to shut off the pump and use the emergency intercom to summon help. Leaving the pump nozzle in the vehicle will prevent any fire from becoming much more dangerous.

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Motorists who cannot avoid getting back into the vehicle during refueling should discharge any static away from the fill point upon exiting the car before going back to the pump nozzle. Static may safely be discharged by touching a metal part of the vehicle, such as the vehicle door, or some other metal surface, with a bare hand.

Consumers can minimize these and other potential fueling hazards by following safe refueling procedures all year long. For more information on avoiding potential problems with static electricity build-up at the pump, and other safe motor fuel refueling, storage and handling guidelines see API's web site at [www.api.org/consumer](http://www.api.org/consumer), and PEI's web site at [www.pei.org/static](http://www.pei.org/static).

The joint public awareness campaign by API and PEI will include distribution of audio and video news releases on avoiding potential static problems. These broadcast releases are planned for distribution to television and radio news outlets nationwide for use in October. Similar news advisories including additional safe refueling and fuel handling guidelines will be distributed to a variety of magazines and newspapers for use during the last quarter of the year.

Public awareness information also will be introduced in a special education program for attendees at the Petroleum Equipment Institute's annual convention and trade show October 5-8 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. PEI's Convention is being held concurrently with the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) annual trade show, The NACS Show, also at the Orange County Convention Center. Approximately 25,000 attendees are expected for that combined three-day event which is the convenience store and petroleum marketing industry's largest trade show. PEI's special education sessions, including the Focus on Static session, will be open to this targeted audience which includes wholesale and retail gasoline station owners and operators nationwide. About 80 percent of the motor fuels sold in the U.S. are purchased at convenience stores.

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Attachment: Safe Refueling Guidelines for Consumers

## Safe Refueling and Fuel Handling Guidelines for Consumers

Here are consumer refueling and fuel safety guidelines that will help keep you and your family safe when refueling your vehicle or filling up gasoline storage containers:

- Turn off your vehicle engine while refueling. Put your vehicle in park and/or set the emergency brake. Disable or turn off any auxiliary sources of ignition such as a camper or trailer heater, cooking units, or pilot lights.
- Do not smoke, light matches or lighters while refueling at the pump or when using gasoline anywhere else.
- Use only the refueling latch provided on the gasoline dispenser nozzle, - never jam the refueling latch on the nozzle open.
- Do not re-enter your vehicle during refueling.
- In the unlikely event a static-caused fire occurs when refueling, leave the nozzle in the fill pipe and back away from the vehicle. Notify the station attendant immediately.
- Do not over-fill or top-off your vehicle tank, which can cause gasoline spillage.
- Avoid prolonged breathing of gasoline vapors. Use gasoline only in open areas that get plenty of fresh air. Keep your face away from the nozzle or container opening.
- When dispensing gasoline into a container, use only an approved portable container and place it on the ground when refueling to avoid a possible static electricity ignition of fuel vapors. Containers should never be filled while inside a vehicle or its trunk, the bed of a pickup truck or the floor of a trailer.
- Only store gasoline in approved containers as required by federal or state authorities. Never store gasoline in glass or any other unapproved containers.
- When filling a portable container, manually control the nozzle valve throughout the filling process. Fill a portable container slowly to decrease the chance of static electricity buildup and minimize spilling or splattering.
- Fill container no more than 95 percent full to allow for expansion.
- Place cap tightly on the container after filling - do not use containers that do not seal properly.
- If gasoline spills on the container, make sure that it has evaporated before you place the container in your vehicle. Report spills to the attendant.
- When transporting gasoline in a portable container make sure it is secured against tipping and sliding, and never leave it in direct sunlight or in the trunk of a car.
- Never siphon gasoline by mouth nor put gasoline in your mouth for any reason. Gasoline can be harmful or fatal if swallowed. If someone swallows gasoline, do not induce vomiting. Contact a doctor immediately.
- Keep gasoline away from your eyes and skin; it may cause irritation. Remove gasoline-soaked clothing immediately.
- Use gasoline as a motor fuel only. Never use gasoline to wash your hands or as a cleaning solvent.