

# Loss Control Insights

## **GASOLINE: ALWAYS A RISK**

Would you store 20 sticks of dynamite, complete with a blasting device, in your basement? Probably not, but that is what you are doing if you bring gasoline into your home.

A gallon (four liters) of gasoline has the explosive power of that much dynamite. All it takes for a gasoline explosion is a small friction spark from a light switch, the flame of a pilot light, or static from socks coming out of a clothes dryer.

Gasoline is dangerous because it gives off vapors that can catch fire and explode. These vapors can travel far from the source. The fire then quickly burns back along the vapor trail to the original source, resulting in the explosion.

Follow these guidelines for the safer use and storage of gasoline:

- Gasoline has only one function, as a fuel. Never use it as a solvent or cleaning fluid.
- Gasoline should never be used or stored indoors or close to heat or flame. It should also not be stored or used where the vapors can seep into basements or under buildings.
- Never use gasoline around a source of ignition. These can include matches, lighters, cigarettes and many other sources.
- Never use gasoline to start or accelerate a fire.
- Fill the equipment tanks prior to use. Refuel with the engine turned off and cool.
- If you are transporting gasoline in a car, keep the container in the trunk and keep the trunk lid ajar for ventilation.
- If fire does start while handling gasoline, do not attempt to extinguish the fire or stop the flow of gasoline. Leave the area immediately, and call for help.
- Use caution when fueling automobiles. Do not get in and out of the automobile when fueling. Although such incidents are rare, an electrical charge on your body could spark a fire, especially during the dry winter months.
- Fill portable gasoline containers outdoors only. Place the container on the ground before filling and never fill containers inside a vehicle or in the bed of a pick-up truck.
- Follow all manufacturer instructions when using cell phones or other electronic devices (those with batteries or connected to an electrical outlet) near gasoline.

Chances are you use gasoline just about every day. Keep these tips in mind next time you are fueling the company vehicle or filling a gasoline can for your mower at home.