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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Gasoline -
Always a Risk*

Gasoline – a commodity that we can't do without! The use of gasoline touches the majority of all human beings. It is so commonly used that we take its use for granted. We need to be more conscious of the potential dangers, if we misuse it. Gasoline is dangerous for our health because it's toxic. Exposure to it either through physical contact or inhalation can cause health problems. The effects of gasoline poisoning can harm every major organ. So, it is important to practice and enforce safe gasoline handling to prevent poisoning.

When careless use of gasoline warrants a call for emergency medical help, assuming that you can't get local medical help, call the American Association of Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. Would you store 20 sticks of dynamite in your basement, garage or in a spare room. I don't think so! If you are storing gasoline in your home, you have the same potential as dynamite. A gallon (4 liters) of gasoline has the same explosive power as that of dynamite.

For a gasoline explosion, it only takes a small friction spark from a light switch, the flame of a pilot light or static from socks coming out of a clothes dryer. The danger in gasoline results from the vapors that can catch fire and explode. The vapors can travel a long way from the source - the fire will quickly burn back to the original source and BAM!!! – Results – the explosion.

Symptoms of Gasoline Poisoning-

Swallowing gasoline can cause a wide range of problems for vital organs. Symptoms of gasoline poisoning may include:

~difficulty breathing	~throat pain or burning
~burning in the esophagus	~abdominal pain
~vision loss	~severe headaches
~extreme fatigue	~convulsions
~body weakness	~loss of consciousness

When gasoline comes in contact with your skin, you may experience red irritation or burns.

Causes of Gasoline Poisoning-

Gasoline, as mentioned earlier, is a necessity in many industries. Gas is the primary fuel used to make most engine-powered vehicles work. The hydrocarbon components of gasoline make it poisonous. Hydrocarbons are a type of organic substance made of hydrogen and carbon molecules.

They are part of modern substances including the following:

~motor oil	~lamp oil
~kerosene	~paint
~rubber cement	~lighter fluid

One of the greatest risk of gasoline exposure is the harm it can do to your lungs when you inhale the fumes. Direct inhalation can cause carbon monoxide poisoning, which is why you should never run a vehicle in an enclosed area, like your garage. Long term exposure in the open can also damage your lungs.

Ted Gordon – Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.
MAFES / EXTENSION (662 566-2201)

Excerpts: <http://www.healthline.com/health/gasoline#Overview>

Safety Smart Magazine (Fall, 2003)

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Getting Emergency Help!

Swallowing gasoline or excessive exposure to fumes warrants a visit to an emergency room or a call to the Poison Control Center. Make sure the victim sits up and drinks water unless they are instructed not to do so. Ensure they're in an area with fresh air.

Be sure that they take these precautions:

- ✓ Don't force vomiting.
- ✓ Don't give the victim milk.
- ✓ Don't give liquids to an unconscious victim.
- ✓ Don't leave the victim and expose yourself to the fumes.
- ✓ Don't attempt to remedy the situation yourself. Call for medical help.

The outlook for gasoline poisoning depends on the amount of exposure and how quickly you get treatment. The faster you get treatment, the more likely you are to recover without significant injury. However, gasoline exposure always has the potential to cause problems to the lungs, mouth and stomach.

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE USE AND STORAGE OF GASOLINE-

- ✓ Gasoline should be used only for its intended purpose, a fuel. Never use it as a cleaning agent or solvent.
- ✓ Gasoline should never be used or stored indoors or close to heat or a flame. It should never be stored or used where the vapors can seep through into a basement or under buildings.
- ✓ Never use gasoline around an ignition source, like a lighter, matches, cigarettes or other live flame sources.
- ✓ Never use gasoline to start a fire or accelerate one.
- ✓ Fill equipment tanks prior to their use. Refuel engines only after the engine has been turned off and cooled down.
- ✓ If you have to transport gasoline in a vehicle, keep the container in the trunk and keep the trunk lid cracked for ventilation.
- ✓ If a fire starts while handling the gasoline, do not attempt to extinguish it or stop it from spreading. Leave the area immediately and call for help.
- ✓ Use caution when fueling your vehicle. Do not get in or out while fueling. These incidents are rare, but an electrical charge on your body could start a fire, especially during the dry winter months.
- ✓ Fill portable gasoline containers outside only. Place the container flat on the ground and never fuel it in the trunk or in the back of a SUV or station wagon.
- ✓ Follow all manufacturer's instructions when using a cellphone or other electrical devices (those with batteries or connected to an electrical outlet) near the gasoline.

PUT SAFETY FIRST!

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**DON'T LEARN SAFETY BY
ACCIDENT!!!**