

Static Electricity and Fires at the Gas Pumps

The Petroleum Equipment Institute is working on a campaign to try and make people aware of fires as a result of "static" (that is, static electricity) at gas pumps. They have researched 150 cases of these fires. The results were very surprising:

- 1) Out of 150 cases, almost all of them were women.
- 2) Almost all cases involved the person getting back in their vehicle while the nozzle was still pumping gas. When finished, they went back to pull the nozzle out. The fire started then as a result of static discharge.
- 3) Most men never get back in their vehicle until completely finished. This is why they are seldom involved in these types of fires.
- 4) Most had on rubber-soled shoes.
- 5) Don't ever use cell phones when pumping gas. (The RF energy from a cell phone (a radio transmitter) can cause sparking on bare metal, much like aluminum foil in a microwave oven.)
- 6) It is the vapors that come out of the gas that cause the fire, when connected with static discharges.
- 7) In 29 fires, the vehicle had been reentered and the nozzle was touched during refueling. This occurred in a variety of makes and models, some resulting in extensive damage to the vehicle, to the station, and to the customer.
- 8) Seventeen fires occurred before, during or immediately after the gas cap was removed and before fueling began.

NEVER get back into your vehicle while filling it with gas. If you absolutely **HAVE** to get in your vehicle while the gas is pumping, make sure you get out, close the door **TOUCHING THE METAL**, before you touch the nozzle. This way the static from your body will be discharged before you ever remove the nozzle.