

◀ HEALTH & SAFETY ALERT ▶



Refuelling Equipment Operations

Recently an operative suffered severe burns to his upper body and respiratory tract whilst in close proximity to a refuelling operation at a light rail track project in Germany. Unfortunately, he passed away six weeks after the incident.

A significant contributing cause of this event appears to be a build-up of pressure within the fuel container due to outside surface temperatures of over 35 °C. Additionally, the refuelling operation was carried out close to an open burning flame used as part of the thermite welding activity close by.

The incident reinforces the potential dangers presented by refuelling equipment; therefore we must all ensure that any refuelling operations are conducted in a manner that seeks to avoid exposing people to risks.

The following safe working methods of conducting refuelling activities are recommended:

Fuel containers

- Use an approved type and regularly inspect for signs of damage.
- Protect from sources of heat and store out of direct sunlight.
- Open slowly to release any pressure built up inside the container and at least 3m away from other workers.
- Do not open or decant within 10m of a naked flame.

When refuelling or decanting fuel

- Maintain a safe distance of at least 3m away from other workers
- Use an approved flexible or rigid pouring spout such as the example pictured
- Wait until equipment has cooled down and engines are stopped before fuelling commences
- Wear flame retardant clothing

