



NFFE Forest Service Council
Safety Committee Update - Chainsaw Fuel Geysers
June 17, 2015



Please share the following information with your Bargaining Unit Employees (BUEs).

Local Union Officials:

It's extremely important that employees who work with chainsaws receive this information and are aware of the potential risk when refueling. It's more than just forwarding this message to all your BUEs, we would like Locals to really be proactive and reach out to your employees, find out who uses chainsaws, and make sure they receive this information.

Over the last few weeks the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have reported incidents (one injury – one near miss) with chainsaws while refueling. Newly designed ¼-turn gas caps now used on some model chainsaws make venting the gas tank after vapor lock difficult. When the operator turns the cap, it does not release the pressure until the cap is ¼ turned, at which point the excess pressure can pop the cap off causing liquid fuel to spray out of the tank. Standard procedure is to move to a safe area free of possible ignition and let the saw cool down. The tank can then be safely vented by opening the fuel cap and releasing the pressure. However, additional consideration should now be given to the hazards associated with relieving tank pressure through these ¼-turn fuel caps. Consider allowing the chainsaw to cool down for 10 to 15 minutes until vapor pressure has subsided and saw will start without removing gas cap. If removal of cap is necessary, a rag can be used to absorb any vented fuel.

You-tube video shows "Fuel Geysers"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ja9t4PtJx_Q&feature=youtu.be

Lessons Learned "Fuel Geysers"

- <http://www.wildfirelessons.net/orphans/viewincident?DocumentKey=496c3462-da9f-480a-9989-7bb7f603ed49>
- <http://www.wildfirelessons.net/orphans/viewincident?DocumentKey=bbc35f64-b650-43f9-a6c8-a818eb9a6981>
- <http://www.wildfirelessons.net/orphans/viewincident?DocumentKey=fcf34c85-381d-48e2-b5fb-d4070cb6b88d>
- <http://www.wildfirelessons.net/orphans/viewincident?DocumentKey=9cd4e43d-e8a3-4b5e-9773-eddd8c136ba8>
- <http://www.wildfirelessons.net/orphans/viewincident?DocumentKey=724ba1a7-e1a2-4e1e-ace0-b095e0b4af85>

As a reminder

- Wear all required PPE for chainsaw operations.
- Symptoms of vapor-lock and an empty fuel tank are similar in nature.
- When possible, place the saw in the shade and allow the saw to cool 5 to 15 minutes before refueling.
- If the fuel is suspected to be pressurized, open the fuel cap while holding a rag—or other covering—over it. Hold the saw away from the face and look away while opening the fuel cap.
- Refuel at least 20 feet (6 m) from an open flame or other sources of ignition.
- Start the saw at least 10 feet (3 m) from the fueling area.
- Wear all required PPE for chainsaw operations.

And from the WO Amendment 6709.11-99-1 Page 20–55 Effective 12/01/1999

FSH 6709.11 Health and Safety Code Handbook

22 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT. This section offers direction and safety guidelines for employees engaged in a variety of work projects and activities focused on managing National Forest System lands.

22.48f – Saw Handling Techniques. General saw handling techniques include:

3. **Fueling Saw.** Select an area with bare ground for storing fuel and oil.
 - a. Allow the saw to cool at least 5 minutes before refueling.
 - (1) Fill the tank on bare ground or other noncombustible surface.
 - (2) Immediately clean up spilled fuel.
 - b. Refuel outdoors and at least 20 feet (6 m) from an open flame or other sources of ignition.
 - c. Start the saw at least 10 feet (3 m) from the fueling area.

~ The End ~

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