



Best practices in storage and handling of fuel

Undeniably, the world's dependence on fuel has increased over the years. Fuel is used in a myriad of operations such as transportation, running farm equipment, lighting, heating water, not to mention cooking among many others. While the importance of fuel in being an important driver in our day-to-day operations has been remarkable, one of the most crucial issues that has arisen is their storage and handling. This is due to the fact that fuel can have impacts on the environment, as well as health and safety of human beings.

Usually, the impacts arise when they are not stored or handled appropriately, and are linked to the physical and chemical characteristics of fuel such as reacting with air if ignited, and ability to cause harm to human body if ingested, inhaled directly or accidentally exposed to skin. On the other hand, some of the possible environmental impacts include: soil pollution and water pollution which might cause diseases such as cancer.

The encouraging news is that these impacts, along with the health and safety risks can be avoided or minimized. Therefore, this week we will highlight some of the best practices in storage and handling that you can implement in your operations to avoid or minimize the impacts, focusing particularly on petrol and diesel.

Proper storage container

One of the most crucial decisions that one can make when storing diesel or petrol is the type of container chosen for such purpose. Metallic containers are usually the most preferred, due to the fact that they cannot be damaged easily compared to other types of containers such as plastic.

While the size of the container you choose to purchase of fuel storage will ultimately depend on the amount of fuel you store, there are a few important points to take note of.

Firstly, the container should always be sealed, and secondly it's recommended that periodic inspections are conducted to identify any potential leaks. In case any leaks are detected the containers should be replaced or repaired. Besides protection of the environment from accidental leaks or spills, proper storage practices will also offer protection against health and safety risks. The picture below is of metallic fuel containers in use at Saruni Samburu, taken during the ecorating reassessment of the property in February 2020.



Impervious surface

It's important to note that fuel such as diesel and petrol are categorized as hazardous pollutants, with potential to contaminate soil and water supplies. Considering that surface water bodies such as lakes and rivers as well as ground water resources provide us with drinking water, water for irrigation and also drinking water for wildlife, there is need to protect these resources from contamination associated with fuel. This can be achieved by ensuring that fuel storage areas are made of impervious surfaces, not to mention being bunded. This will ensure that any potential leaks or spills are contained and do not reach the environment. The picture below taken during

the ecorating reassessment of Sand River Masai Mara Camp in November 2019 is a fuel tank on an impervious surface which is well bunded.



Caging and provision of signage

Keeping your guests and staff safe and feeling secure is extremely important. The storage area for fuel should be clearly marked with a safety signage, as a way of informing staff and visitors of the potential danger. For effective messaging, ensure a correct signage is used. For instance, in diesel storage area it's important to indicate that it is flammable. See the picture below of a safety signage you could use.



Source: (<https://www.safetysign.com/products/5514/danger-diesel-fuel-no-smoking-label>)

It is vitally important that everyone understands and implements these best practices while storing and handling fuel. By taking lead and inspiring others too, we can all protect the environment, and the health and safety of employees and guests, from impacts associated with improper storage and handling of fuel.