



CIRSA HAZARD ALERT

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SAFER TOGETHER

Hazard Alert - Dangers of Topping Off Your Gas Tank



Why Topping Off Your Gas Tank Can Cost You More Than You Think

Topping off your gas tank might seem harmless, but it can lead to a host of unexpected issues that impact both your vehicle and your wallet. Overfilling can disrupt critical vehicle systems, cause mechanical failures, damage the environment, and result in unnecessary financial loss.

Here is why you should think twice before adding that extra drop:

1. Protect Your Car from Damage

When you attempt to add more fuel after the pump clicks off, you risk overwhelming your vehicle's vapor recovery systems. This can lead to fuel entering sensitive components, resulting in valve failures, damaged vapor canisters, and malfunctioning sensors, causing the need for costly avoidable repairs. Topping off your gas tank can also trigger the dreaded check engine light, decrease fuel efficiency, and even shorten your vehicle's lifespan.

2. Safeguard the Environment

Vapor recovery systems are designed to capture harmful gasoline vapors containing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which contribute to smog and ground-level ozone, serious pollutants that harm air quality. Exposure to VOCs during fueling can also negatively impact human health, causing headaches, dizziness, respiratory issues, and exacerbating asthma. In addition to these impacts, overfilling can result in spills that lead to soil and water contamination, creating lasting environmental damage.

Dangers of Topping Off Your Gas Tank (cont.)

3. Avoid Wasting Your Hard-Earned Money

Did you know that when the gas station pump clicks off, any excess gas you try to get for your vehicle after the pump clicks off may get sucked back into the station's tanks? If gas station pump vapor recovery systems are functioning properly, you could end up paying for fuel you never even received.

Here are Some Suggestions for Your Organization:

1. Implement a Strict "No Topping Off" Policy

- Establish a clear policy that prohibits topping off gas tanks in all municipal vehicles.
- Integrate this rule into fleet management procedures and employee training sessions.

2. Boost Employee Training and Awareness

- Include best fueling practices and the dangers of topping off in new hire orientation and ongoing safety training.
- Create training modules highlighting how proper fueling habits can extend vehicle life, protect the environment, and save money.
- Share real-world examples of equipment damage and repair costs caused by overfilling to drive home the financial implications.

3. Install Eye-Catching Signage at Fueling Stations

- Place prominent signs at municipal fueling stations to remind employees to stop when the pump clicks.
- Use bright, engaging stickers on fuel pumps with catchy phrases like:
 - "Top Off? Knock It Off!"
 - "It Stops, You Stop!"
 - "Click then Quit"

4. Conduct Regular Vehicle Inspections

- Schedule routine inspections of vehicles to check for damage to vapor recovery systems, fuel tanks, and emission control components.
- Implement a preventive maintenance schedule to ensure vapor recovery systems function correctly, reducing the chances of fuel-related repairs.

Resources

- [Should You Top Off Your Car's Gas Tank?, Consumer Report](#)
- [Onboard Refueling Vapor Recovery: Evaluation of the ORVR Program in the United States, ICCT](#)
- [Ground-level Ozone Basics, EPA](#)
- [Is it Bad to Top Off Your Gas Tank?, AAA Club Alliance](#)
- [Topping Off Your Gas Tank Is A Huge Mistake - Here's Why, SLASHGEAR](#)