

NFPA Fact Sheets

Gasoline Safety

There has been a steady decline in the average number of gasoline fires in homes each year since 1980 when there were 15,000 fires.

Facts & Figures*

- In 1998, there were 4,700 gasoline fires in U.S. homes, resulting in 86 deaths, 463 injuries and \$92 million in direct property damage.
- 53% of home gasoline fires each year between 1994 and 1998 were categorized as incendiary or suspicious. Three-quarters of civilian injuries resulted from unintentional causes such as: fuel spills or releases; using gasoline to wash parts, clean or refinish; gasoline too close to a heat source; children playing; improper storage; using gasoline to kindle a fire; and improper fueling technique.
- Matches were the most common ignition source in home gasoline fires.
* From NFPA's *U.S. Home Product Report: Forms and Types of Materials First Ignited in Fires*, December 2001.

Safety Tips:

- Keep gasoline out of children's sight and reach. Children should never handle gasoline.
- If fire does start while handling gasoline, do not attempt to extinguish the fire or stop the flow of gasoline. Leave the area immediately, and call for help.
- Do not use or store gasoline near possible ignition sources (i.e., electrical devices, oil- or gas-fired appliances, or any other device that contains a pilot flame or a spark).
- Store gasoline outside the home (i.e., in a garage or lawn shed) in a tightly closed metal or plastic container approved by an independent testing laboratory or the local or state fire authorities. Never store gasoline in glass containers or non-reusable plastic containers (i.e., milk jugs).
- Store only enough gasoline necessary to power equipment and let machinery cool before refueling it.
- Never use gasoline inside the home or as a cleaning agent.
- Clean up spills promptly and discard clean-up materials properly.
- Do not smoke when handling gasoline.
- Never use gasoline in place of kerosene.
- Use caution when fueling automobiles. Do not get in and out of the automobile when fueling. Although rare, an electrical charge on your body could spark a fire, especially during the dry winter months.
- Only fill portable gasoline containers outdoors. Place the container on the ground before filling and never fill containers inside a vehicle or in the bed of a pick-up truck.
- Follow all manufacturers instructions when using electronic devices (those with batteries or connected to an electrical outlet) near gasoline.