

## Gas Station Safety

The risks of managing a gas station are more complex than simply safeguarding your customers' fuel source. In addition to the risks of gasoline itself, there are a number of other hazards that could affect both your employees and your customers. The following are some—but not all—of the common risks associated with running a gas station and how to contain them.

### Gasoline Hazards

Several of gasoline's properties render it dangerous and particularly difficult to contain. It requires extra work on your part to ensure your gasoline poses no extra risk to employees, customers or members of the public.

Gasoline floats on the surface of water and can travel long distances, potentially causing danger far away from the place where it escaped. Similarly, gasoline vapor does not disperse easily and can also travel for long distances. Unlike its liquid form, gasoline vapor tends to sink to the lowest possible level and may collect in tanks, cavities and drains where there is little air movement. The vapor, like the liquid, is harmful if ingested.

There is a substantial fire and explosion risk wherever gasoline is present. But gasoline need not be present to cause damage—empty tanks and gasoline cans may emit flammable vapor after the container is emptied.

### Vehicle Movement

One of the most common causes of injuries at gas stations is vehicle movement. It is unavoidable—the unceasing movement of vehicles in the parking lot mixed with pedestrian traffic heightens the risk of vehicles accidentally colliding with structures, people and other vehicles.

To counteract this risk, devise a safe system of traffic movement, such as a one-way system for entering and exiting the parking lot. Provide signs outlining traffic control arrangements and install barriers to protect vulnerable structures such as fuel tanks.

### Hazardous Substances

Besides gasoline, gas stations sell or use various chemicals and other items that can cause respiratory problems, dermatitis or chemical burns.

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**Gasoline is used everywhere, but that does not make it safe. You must work hard to ensure your filling station's large quantities of gasoline pose no extra risk.**

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Protecting employees, customers and members of the public from your business' hazardous substances starts with storing all hazardous chemicals in their original containers. This helps prevent misinformation about a container's contents from causing injury or illness. Rely on Safety Data Sheets compiled by the substances' manufacturers for information on harmful chemicals used or stored at your gas station. All employees should be trained to use hazardous substances and be provided with the appropriate protective clothing.

### Manual Handling

Pay particular attention to manual handling, a deceptive workplace health and safety hazard at gas stations that is

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often overlooked because of more conspicuous hazards like gasoline usage and storage. Improper manual handling can cause back injuries and muscle strains.

Start protecting against manual handling risks by eliminating all unnecessary manual handling. Train every employee in proper lifting techniques and specify when something qualifies as unnecessary manual handling.

## Slips, Trips and Falls

This hazard can happen anywhere. If any snow and ice lingers on your parking lot during the winter, pedestrians could slip and vehicles could skid. Spilled fuel and oil are also significant slipping hazards.

To shrink your exposure to slips, trips and falls, spread industrial salt mixed with fine gravel during icy conditions and after spills to absorb fuel or oil.

## Electricity

Misused or poorly maintained equipment is typically the start of electricity hazards. The risk increases when workers use equipment in a wet environment.

Cutting down your gas station's electricity risks is difficult, but not impossible. If your business has a mechanical car wash, install a readily accessible emergency stop button. Ensure that all electrical equipment is suitably insulated and the electrical dangers of using any machine are clearly labeled and outlined.

## Fire Risks

Managing a gas station means you will have to manage the inevitable fire risks. Obstructed exits, paired with the presence of abundant gasoline, can cause disaster.

Limiting your fire risks requires keeping all escape routes and fire exits clear at all times. Never let trash accumulate—make sure all employees help in keeping open areas and exits clear of clutter.

## Violence and Robberies

Robbery of cash or goods can happen at gas stations because of a number of factors, including the high

number of customers, the large amount of cash and the ability to exit and enter quickly.

Consider investing in security cameras, alarms and other security measures to deter violence and robberies.

## Compressed Air Systems

With the capability of exploding a tire if over-inflated, compressed air systems are powerful machines. They should be treated with respect, not as a toy.

Prevent compressed air machine misuse by placing it within sight of the shop attendant. Displaying clear information on how to use the machine will help limit accidents and misuse.

## Tailored Insurance Is Best

Managing a gas station is difficult—your risks are numerous, and all require constant supervision. The insurance professionals at Cluett Commercial Insurance Agency, Inc. have all the resources to help you rest easy. Reduce your gas station risks while bolstering your business for future prosperity. Call us today at (781) 582-1600 to start extinguishing your risks and safeguarding your business.