Flammable Liquid – Combustible Liquid

Construction Field Training

OSHA 1926.155

Why is it important that we know the difference between **Flammable** and **Combustible**? We should know what they mean because they are used in the SDS sheets to describe how dangerous a liquid is. To understand these terms, we are going to need to look first at another term, **FLASH POINT**.

Flash Point = This is the temperature at which a liquid gives off enough vapor or fumes to create a mixture of air and vapor that can be ignited at its surface. A liquid that we work with every day is gasoline and when you open the can you can smell the fumes. That means its flash point is low enough to create enough fumes for ignition at our everyday working temperature. Its flash point is low. In fact, it's very low, about -25 degrees F. Diesel on the other hand, won't create an ignition mixture until it's somewhere between 85 degrees and 100 degrees F.

Flammable Liquid = Any liquid that has a flash point below 140 degrees F. So, both gasoline and diesel would be considered a flammable liquid.

Combustible Liquid = Any liquid that has a flash point between 140 and 200 degrees F.

Where would you find the FLASH POINT? = You find the flash point and other important information in the SDS for that product.

Where do you find the SDS for a product? = Go to http://www.hacsafety.com you will find SDS sheets for all the typical products we use.

What does all this tell you?

We work outside during the summer and most days it gets very close to 100 degrees F. As you can see, any **flammable liquid** could get to its flash point easily. After all, if your gas or diesel can is setting in the sun it can quickly get over 120 degrees F, and any flammable liquid would be a dangerous hazard.

Just about every chemical product we work with has a flash point shown on the SDS. Look them up, you may be surprised how dangerous some everyday items can be when setting in the sun.

During the winter or cooler months, a combustible liquid would not be as much of a hazard as a flammable liquid. After all gasoline produces enough vapor mix to explode at -25 degrees F.

DANGER NO SMOKING

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