



PEI Continues to Comply and Report Static Electricity-Related Incidents Occuring During Vehicle Refueling

PEI continues to focus on educating the public about potential fire hazards due to the discharge of static electricity at the gas pump.

TULSA, OK ([PRWEB](#)) October 7, 2004 -- Since static fires first came to public attention in the mid-nineties, the Petroleum Equipment Institute (PEI) has been a leading voice in investigating and educating the public about potential fire hazards due to the discharge of static electricity at the gas pump.

With the approach of cooler weather and the upcoming observance of National Fire Protection Week, beginning October 3, 2004, it's important to remind the public of the many ways static electricity is generated.

Re-entering your vehicle during refueling, particularly in cool, dry weather can cause a build-up of static electricity. It may be tempting to get back in the car for any number of reasons, but the average fill-up takes only two minutes. Staying outside the vehicle will greatly minimize the likelihood of any build-up of static electricity that could be discharged at the nozzle.

Remember the Three Rules for Safe Refueling:

- 1) Turn Off Engine
- 2)

Don't Smoke and

- 3)

Never re-enter your vehicle.

PEI continues to focus on making the public aware of static dangers. In the past year, PEI has been represented on both talk radio and morning television, reporting on Safety Tips for Refueling. The Myth Buster program, created for the Discovery Channel, featured PEI Executive Vice President, Bob Renkes, in two segments on static electricity at the pump. These segments are still being shown in reruns. PEI's web site now features a video of an actual refueling fire which can be viewed at www.pei.org/static.

As of September 2004, PEI has received 160 reports from 39 states and Washington, DC. In all the reports, obvious causes such as open flame, running motor, etc., could be eliminated. It appears to many people in the industry that electrostatic charging was the probable cause of the fires. In many of the accidents reported, the motorist became charged during the refueling process through friction between clothing and the car seat to such an extent that electrostatic discharge to the vehicle body, fuel cap or dispensing nozzle occurred.

PEI's investigation of refueling fires shows static electricity to be the main cause of fires at the pump. None of the incidents investigated were related to cell phones, as has been suggested in numerous emails circulating on the Internet over the past several years. PEI refutes the emails attributed to its organization, and has neither authored nor authorized any mass email documents on the subject. Though much of the information contained in the emails is factually correct, it also contains some erroneous information particularly as it relates to cell phones and fires.



For more information on avoiding potential problems with static electricity build-up at the pump, refueling safety and safe fuel storage and handling guidelines, visit PEI's web site at www.pei.org/static.

PEI is the international trade association for distributors, manufacturers and installers of equipment used in petroleum marketing and liquid-handling operations. Users of the equipment include service station and convenience store owners, terminals, bulk plants and airport refueling operations.

PEI is comprised of more than 1,661 companies engaged in the manufacture and distribution of equipment used in petroleum marketing operations. Members are located in 50 states and 81 countries. The Institute's headquarters are located in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

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