

Does your gas can meet OSHA requirements?

Can you legally use that red plastic \$5.00 gas can on your jobsite?

The short answer, **probably not.**

[OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1926.152\(a\)\(1\)](#) states "Only approved containers and portable tanks shall be used for storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids. Approved safety cans or Department of Transportation approved containers shall be used for the handling and use of flammable liquids in quantities of 5 gallons or less."

Anytime the word "shall" is used in a regulation, it means that this rule is mandatory and must be followed.

What is an approved safety can or DOT gas can?

A safety can is (29CFR1926.155(1)) an approved, closed container, of not more than 5 gallons capacity, having a flash arresting screen, spring closing lid and spout cover and so designed that it will safely relieve internal pressure when subjected to fire exposure.

Approval is given by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, for example, Underwriters' Laboratory, Inc.

Gas cans can only display DOT approval markings when they meet stringent Department of Transportation requirements. **Here is where it gets confusing:**, inexpensive plastic gas cans *may* meet EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) requirements, but they *do NOT meet* DOT rules. Some gas cans may say they meet CARB spill-proof regulations in certain states or AQMD (Air Quality Management District) rules. Again, this doesn't help when trying to comply with OSHA. **None of these other regulatory agencies are the same as DOT. They are not interchangeable.**

If your head isn't already spinning, one last point. If you are looking for a UL "approval", you will see the following words on the product, UL Listed. If your can has a UL Classified marking, this is not the same as UL Listed (approved).

Now that you know the correct can to use, shown below are safety rules to follow when using gas cans. This information can be used for this week's tailgate safety meeting.

Safety Tips for Gas Cans

Portable Gas Cans

Several vehicle fires have occurred as a result of filling metal portable gasoline cans while placed on the back of pickup trucks with plastic bed liners. The insulating effect of the plastic surface prevents the static charge generated by the gasoline flowing into the gas can from grounding. As static charge builds, it can create a static spark between the gas can and the fuel

nozzle. When the spark occurs in the flammable range in the gasoline vapor space near the open mouth of the gas can, a fire can occur. Some tips:

1. Do not fill any container while it is inside a vehicle, a vehicles trunk, pickup bed, or on any surface other than the ground.
2. Use only an approved container with a cap that fits tightly.
3. Remove the approved container from the vehicle and place it on the ground. Keep container a safe distance away from the vehicle, other customers, and traffic.
4. Keep the nozzle in contact with the can during filling.
5. Fill container about 95% full to allow for expansion.
6. If gasoline spills on the container, make sure it is evaporated before putting it in your vehicle.

Equipment Refueling

1. Shut off the motor on equipment and give it time to cool off before refueling.
2. Don't refuel near an open flame or near a sparking situation.
3. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby.
4. Don't spill the fuel.
5. Don't overfill the fuel tank. And on hot days, allow room for expansion.

Stay safe. Only use approved gas cans.