10 Steps to Handle Small Gasoline Spills

Safety Talk

You’re steam cleaning the shop floor when you accidentally knock over a 5-gallon can of gasoline near the welding booth. Do you know what to do? To prevent a small spill from turning into a dangerous incident, follow these steps:

1. Stay calm.
2. Warn the welders. Sound the emergency alarm or let someone know to immediately notify the welders to stop welding and stop any other operation that generates sparks.
3. Clear all unprotected personnel from the spill area. (Evacuation is only required for large spills which involve danger to personnel. This will be determined by a trained and competent person on site.)
4. If the spill involves fire, immediately follow your shop’s fire reporting procedures.
5. Remove all sources of ignition such as open flames, hot surfaces and electrical, static or frictional sparks.
6. Put on the proper personal protective equipment (PPE), such as splash-proof goggles, face shields, gloves and correct respirators before attempting any spill control actions. The minimum required protection is acid resistant gloves, splash-proof goggles and a respirator. Ask your supervisor for additional PPE requirements.
7. Ventilate spilled areas and stop or contain the leak/spill source (if it is a bulk storage). Attempt this only if you can do it without risk.
8. Use a pump or absorbent materials to collect the spilled gasoline into an approved container until it can be disposed of safely.
9. Wash spilled areas with detergent and water to reduce slipping hazards. Ensure that no

contaminated water is introduced into the sewage system. Collect the water in approved drums for disposal.

10. If a spill involves battery electrolytes or acids containing lead or other heavy metals, collect
the residue in approved drums for proper disposal. (Do not flush it into the sewage system.)

If you’re in doubt of the proper method to contain the spill, evacuate the area and contact your supervisor for assistance.

When a spill occurs, keep your cool and take care of it, before it turns into something unmanageable.