

Safety Alert

Refuelling activities and risk of fire

14 June 2021

Background information

In recent months, our supplier chain partners have had a number of incidents, involving fires with plant and equipment, linked to refuelling activities. On one occasion this led to burns to an operative's torso, which subsequently, led to a RIDDOR reportable incident.

While refuelling plant and equipment, please consider the following:

- Always turn off the engine prior to refueling.
- Do not re-fuel a hot engine, this could cause a fire.
- Ensure the fuel cap is fully secured and check for leaks, do not start the engine if there's a fuel leak.
- Check that the spark plug boot is secure, a loose boot may cause sparks that could ignite any combustible fumes and cause a fire.
- Check that all connections which could cause a spark are secure.
- Ensure approved fuel containers are used.
- Ensure that the fuel source – petrol/Jerry can are removed from the area before re-starting the equipment.
- Do not overfill the fuel tank – 95% full is a good guideline to follow.
- After refueling, start the engine outdoors and away from where refueled (at least 3 metres).



Lessons Learnt

- Consider the use of flame retardant clothing, during refuelling activities.
- Ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and safe system of work are known, understood and implemented, for refuelling activities.
- Ensure operatives are trained and competent to undertake refuelling activities.
- Ensure emergency procedures are in place, to deal with any issues when refuelling activities.
- Ensure adequate firefighting equipment is at hand, during refuelling activities and any hot work activities.
- Ensure adequate assurance activities are carried out.