

**SAN RAFAEL FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**MARINWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**Phone: (415) 485-3304**

**Fax: (415) 453-1627**

**Recommended Emergency Home Fuel Storage**

**Limits and Guidelines**

*The information in this handout is only intended to provide typical homeowners with general guidelines concerning emergency fuel storage at residential one and two family residences. Please consult the Fire Prevention Division for definitive answers to any questions you might have, after reviewing the following recommendations.*

The following guidelines are based on the 2019 edition of the California Fire Code. And the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 30 & 58, and the NFPA Generator Safety guidelines.

**Fuel Storage Concerns**

With our changing climate and increased fire danger, proposed public safety power outages have increased the popularity of portable generators and gas-powered equipment in the residential environment. The real need to stockpile fuel has increased fire danger and hazards in our communities. Naturally, the Public Safety community (Fire, Police and Healthcare) are now concerned about having thousands of homeowners throughout the county with relatively uncontrolled fuel storage capacities on their private property or residences.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you reduce your home fuel storage capacities to no more than 10 gallons of flammable liquids (gasoline or Coleman white gas), 25 gallons of flammable gas (propane) in portable DOT cylinders. Fuels do not have an indefinite shelf life; and in fact, many heating/cooking/ appliance manufactures recommend that you consume all said fuels within 6 months of purchase.

Your cooperation in complying with these important Life Safety guidelines is greatly appreciated. These guidelines are truly intended to save your life and preserve your property. Please contact your local fire prevention division for further clarification on these or any other issues.

**Home Storage of Flammable Liquids**

(Gasoline & Coleman White Gas)

1. Maximum TOTAL residential storage of flammable liquids (gasoline) shall be limited to 30 gallons; preferably stored in an unattached garage, or shed (CFC Table 5003.1.1 (1))

2. Of those 30 gallons, no more than 10 gallons can be stored in an attached garage; and positively no flammable liquid storage is allowed in basements or below grade compartments. Flammable liquids shall not be stored near paths of egress, utility meters, nor plastic refuse/recycling containers, or under unprotected stairs.

3. Quantities in residential occupancies shall not exceed that necessary for maintenance purposes and operation of equipment (CFC § 5704.3.4.2 (7)

4. Quantities of flammable and combustible liquids in excess of 10 gallons (38 L) used for maintenance purposes and the operation of equipment shall be stored in **approved** liquid storage cabinets. (CFC § 5704.3. 4.4)

5. The fire code official (or their designee) is authorized to require removal of fueled equipment from locations where the presence of such equipment is determined to be hazardous. (CFC §313.1.1)

6. Empty containers shall be counted as full when calculating total storage capacity. (CFC §5704.3.3.4)

7. Only approved flammable liquid storage containers shall be used. Most of these containers are labeled as approved for flammable liquid use and indicate the standards they are designed to meet (DOT, ASTM, NFPA, Etc.). Always use approved or original containers. (No used plastic jugs or glass containers!). (CFC §5704.3.1.1, NFPA 30 §9.4)

8. If you decide to store more than 10 gallons of flammable liquids at your home, you should have at least one (1) 2A:10BC rated fire extinguisher, located no closer than 10 feet, and no further than away than 50 feet.

9. NEVER smoke or have any ignition sources such as flames or spark producing electrical tools, or heat producing items including stoves/barbeques, fireplaces or other heat sources in the area when handling, transferring or dispensing flammable liquids.

**Home Storage of Flammable LP-Gases**

(Propane & Butane)

1. For portable DOT tank storage, you are allowed up to 25 gallons total capacity. You could have up to five 5-gallon (20lb) portable appliance cylinders (the size usually found on BBQ grills-DOT 4BA240); or one 23-gallon (100 lb) cylinder (DOT 4BW240), in storage at your home, in an unattached garage or shed. Empty containers shall be counted as full when calculating total storage capacity.

2. Portable LP gas containers shall not be used in buildings or in a basement, pit or similar location where heavier-than-air gas might collect. (CFC 6103.2.1, 6103.2.1.1)

3. Weeds, grass, brush, combustible rubbish, trash/recycling totes and other combustible materials shall be kept not less than 10 feet (3048 mm) from LP-gas tanks or containers. (CFC 6107.3)

4. You are only allowed to store up to two (2) of the small portable 1-pound disposable propane cylinders inside your home or attached garage. All other propane cylinder storage must be outside your home in an unattached garage or shed. (NFPA 58: Table 8.3.1 (a))

5. NEVER store or place propane cylinders in areas of excessive heat (120 degrees or higher) or near a stove, fireplace or other heat source. The heat builds up pressure inside the cylinder, which may cause the release of propane. Flash fires or explosions can result from exposing cylinders to heat.

6. NEVER smoke or have any ignition sources such as flames or spark producing electrical tools in the area when handling or dispensing from cylinders.

**PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY**

1. Generators should be used in well ventilated locations outside away from all doors, windows and vent openings.

2. Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.

3. Place generators so that exhaust fumes can’t enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building.

4. Make sure to install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer’s instructions for correct placement and mounting height.

5. Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is hot.

6. When plugging in appliances, make sure they are plugged directly into the generator or a heavy duty outdoor-rated extension cord.

7. Extension cords should be checked for cuts, tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.

8. No permanent generator installation can be fueled by propane if the property is serviced with PG&E natural gas.