



Health and Safety in Farming

HSNO brief for farmers – Storage of fuels on farms



Storage of petrol and diesel

The fuel you use on your farm needs to be stored safely so that any leak, spill or fire is contained to avoid harm to people, property or the environment.

Fuel stores

You need to ensure the location of your fuel store meets both HSNO and local council regulations.

Fuels must be stored in a well ventilated area, meet separation requirements (e.g. at least 20 metres from habitable buildings and at least 6 metres from other dangerous goods or combustible materials (such as hay barns)) and be compounded or located so that spills will not endanger any building or flow into a stream or waterway.

Above ground tanks also need to be properly installed and maintained to minimise any risk of them falling or being knocked over, or posing a danger to people who have to fill them.

Licensing requirements

Depending on the size of your farm and the quantity of fuel you have, you may need a location test certificate. This certificate is effectively a “site licence” for flammables.

If your farm is greater than 4 hectares and you have no more than 2,000 litres of petrol stored in a compliant above ground tank, you do **not** need a location test certificate.

If the petrol is stored in containers or drums, and provided you have no more than 2,000 litres in the same place, you will **not** need a location test certificate.¹

This exemption does not apply when:

- the farm is less than 4 hectares;
- the fuel is stored below ground;
- the fuel store doesn't meet the requirements for design, construction and installation, separation distances and spill control.

For further information, see Test certificates for fuel stores (Brief 5).

Fire extinguishers

You are required to have at least **one** fire extinguisher where more than 50 litres of petrol is stored.

If you have more than 200 litres of petrol or 500 litres of diesel, you will need a **second** fire extinguisher. Fire extinguishers should be a 30B rated 2 kg dry powder extinguisher or a 30B rated 9 litre foam extinguisher.

For further information, see Fire extinguishers (Brief 9).

¹ The 2,000 litre limit is the total quantity of petrol and any other flammable liquid.

Signage

Where fuel is stored in a bulk tank, or you have more than 250 litres of petrol or 1,000 litres of diesel in drums or containers, you need to have signs in place. For bulk fuel tanks, these signs can be in the form of clearly visible tank labels. Signs must state what the hazards are and what to do in an emergency.

For further information, see Signage for fuels on farms (Brief 4).

Controlling spills

Where petrol or diesel is stored, you must be prepared to clean-up spills. If a spill occurs, you will need to safely dispose of any wastes, including any materials used in the clean-up. Staff should be trained to deal with spills, and having a spill kit handy is important.

If the amount of fuel stored is more than 2,000 litres, it must be compounded or banded so any spill can be contained. This is known as secondary containment. If the quantity is less than 2,000 litres, as an alternative to compounding you can locate your fuel store in a place where any spill will not endanger buildings or flow into a natural water body.

For further information, see Secondary containment on farms (Brief 10), Spillage procedures (Brief 11) and Spill kits (Brief 12).

Documentation

Staff handling petrol or diesel must know about the dangers of the fuel. You can get this information from a safety data sheet.

You should have a safety data sheet handy at all times in cases there is an accident. If you don't have one, ask your fuel supplier. They are required to provide you with this documentation.

Emergency response plans

You need to plan for emergencies involving fuel stored on your farm.²

If you store more than 2,000 litres of petrol or diesel, you will require an emergency response plan.

This plan must advise anyone handling the fuel of any likely emergencies and describe what to do if an emergency occurs.

An emergency response plan must give information on how to contact trained personnel, as well as the emergency services who would respond to any call for assistance.

The plan should also state where to find any equipment or product information required for each emergency response.

An emergency response plan must be tested annually and records of these tests need to be kept for at least 2 years.

Training and approved handlers

All people who handle fuel are required to have received training in the safe handling of those fuels and what to do in an emergency.

If your farm is 4 hectares or larger, and you are storing no more than 2,000 litres of petrol, you do **not** need to be an approved handler. For smaller farms, or where you have more than 2,000 litres of petrol, you **must** be an approved handler for the petrol or be able to contact an approved handler in an emergency.

Further information

Best practice for fuel storage can be found in the *Approved Practice Guide for Safe Above-Ground Fuel Storage on Farms*, available from:
<http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/publications/pdfs/ER-APG-03-1.pdf>

The hazardous properties of petrol or diesel will be given on a safety data sheet, which you can get from your fuel supplier.

You should also check with your councils to see if they have any requirements in their District or Regional Plans.

For a copy of an emergency response plan template, call 0800 376 234 or download it from:
<http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/industry/farming/>

Information is also available from the ERMA New Zealand Hazardous Substance Compliance Line 0800 376 234.

² This is a requirement of the Health and Safety in Employment Act.

