



New Mexico Department of Agriculture

Office of the Director/Secretary

MSC 3189

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January 2, 2020

TO: Gasoline Retailers, Wholesalers, Jobbers, and Repairmen
FROM: Jeff M. Witte, Director/Secretary
SUBJECT: Recommendations for the Storage and Handling of Alcohol-Blended Fuels (SCS 2020 E-2)

This external policy supersedes SCS 2018 E-2 dated January 2, 2018.

Alcohol-blended fuels require special handling and there are precautionary measures necessary to ensure a quality product.

Alcohol-blended fuel is particularly sensitive to water. A phase separation can occur if water is present in a tank in which alcohol-blended fuel is stored. This means, the water and alcohol will separate, leaving the alcohol layered below the gasoline on the bottom of the storage tank.

Prior to converting any tank to alcohol-blended fuel storage, all water must be removed from the tank. Be certain fill caps have satisfactory gaskets and are kept tightly closed to keep out water.

An inspection program should be implemented to frequently monitor water levels. Any time the water level in a tank reaches 1/4 inch it should be pumped out, otherwise, a phase separation can occur. Special water finding pastes are needed to detect water in alcohol-blended fuels, in that conventional pastes may not detect water in the presence of alcohol.

When alcohol-blended fuel is placed in a tank, it should be filled and kept as full as possible for at least two weeks, allowing for a curing period. Because alcohol has a detergent effect, rust, varnish, and gums in the tank will be cleansed from the inside walls, creating a sludge on the bottom of the tank. During the curing period, it is recommended a "bottom sample" be taken at least once per day to determine sludge levels. Anytime the sludge reaches 1/2 inch it should be removed.

It is recommended that appropriate filters be installed on all dispensers. The dispenser filters may pick up large amounts of rust during the first few weeks and should be examined and changed as needed.

If you have any questions about this matter, please refer them to:

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JMW/rj