

**POLICY ON USE OF CHEMICAL FUELS
(LIQUID, GASEOUS OR JELLIED)**

PURPOSE

To share the policy and guidelines on the use of chemical fuels by the membership of the Boy Scouts of America

BACKGROUND

There are three factors that influence the establishment of Scouting's policy on the use of fuel other than natural wood: (1) the basic purpose of Scouting and its camping program, (2) the protection from hazards of chemical fuels, and (3) the necessity of safely adapting to local conditions and practices.

First, it is essential to Scouting's purpose that a boy learn and practice the skills of primitive living. A boy develops a personal confidence, initiative and preparation for life as he advances through the Scouting program.

In building a fire, a boy needs to learn the care and use of tools; he must know about tinder, types of fuel and how to prepare the fire. The correct principles of building a fire to cook his food and warm his body, containing fire and putting it out are essential for his training in campcraft, self-reliance and preparedness.

The need for adapting to special circumstances, such as lack of natural wood for fuel or the regulations of specific areas where open fires are prohibited for safety or environmental reasons, makes it necessary for Scouts and Scout leaders to learn the skills and safety procedures in using chemical fuel stoves.

Convenience is one of the joys of modern life, but with it goes the necessity of precaution against many hazards.

When any chemical fuel is used for cooking and lighting, it is the fuel that is dangerous – not the stove and lanterns.

POLICY AND GUIDELINES

For safety reasons, knowledgeable adult supervision must be provided when Scouts are involved in the storage of chemical fuels, the handling of chemical fuels in the filling of stoves and lanterns, or the lighting of chemical fuels.

Battery-operated lanterns and flashlights should be used by Scouts in camping activities, particularly in and around canvas tents. No chemical-fueled lantern or stove is to be used inside a tent.

Kerosene, gasoline, or liquefied petroleum fuel lanterns may, when necessary, be used inside permanent buildings or for outdoor lighting. When used indoors, there should be adequate ventilation. Strict adherence

to the safety standards and instructions of the manufacturers in fueling and lighting such stoves and lanterns must be carried out under the supervision of a responsible and knowledgeable adult.

Both gasoline and kerosene shall be kept in well-marked approved containers (never in a glass container) and stored in a ventilated locked box at a safe distance (minimum 20 feet) from buildings and tents.

Empty liquid petroleum cylinders for portable stoves and lanterns should be returned home or to base camp. They may explode when heated and therefore must never be put in fireplaces or with burnable trash.

The use of liquid fuels for starting any type of fire is prohibited, including lighting damp wood, charcoal and ceremonial campfires. Solid-type starters are just as effective, easier to store and carry, and much safer to use for this purpose.

All types of space heaters that use chemical fuels consume oxygen and must be used only in well-ventilated areas. When used in cabins, camper-trucks and recreational vehicles, there is not only a fire danger, but also lives can be lost from asphyxiation if not well ventilated. Use of charcoal burners indoors can be lethal by causing carbon monoxide poisoning.

GUIDELINES FOR SAFELY USING CHEMICAL STOVES AND LANTERNS

1. Use compressed or liquid-gas stoves and/or lanterns only with knowledgeable adult supervision, and in Scouting facilities only where and when permitted.
2. Operate and maintain them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions included with the stove or lantern.
3. Store fuel in approved containers and in storage under adult supervision. Keep all chemical fuel containers away from hot stoves and campfires, and store them below 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
4. Let hot stoves and lanterns cool before changing cylinders of compressed gas or refilling from bottles of liquid gas.
5. Refill liquid-gas stoves and lanterns a safe distance from any flames, including other stoves, campfires and personal smoking substances. A commercial camp stove fuel should be used for safety and performance. Pour through a filter funnel. Recap both the device and the fuel container before igniting.
6. Never fuel a stove or lantern inside a cabin; always do this outdoors. Do not operate a stove or lantern in an unventilated structure. Provide at least two ventilation openings, one high and one low, to provide oxygen and exhaust for lethal gases. Never fuel, ignite, or operate a stove or lantern in a tent.
7. Place the stove on a level, secure surface before operating. On snow, place insulated support under the stove to prevent melting and tipping.

8. With soap solution, periodically check fittings for leakage on compressed-gas stoves and on pressurized liquid-gas stoves before lighting.
9. When lighting a stove keep fuel bottles and extra canisters well away. Do not hover over the stove when lighting it. Keep your head and body to one side. Open the stove valve quickly for two full turns and light carefully, with head, fingers and hands to the side of the burner. Then adjust down.
10. Do not leave a lighted stove or lantern unattended.
11. Do not overload the stovetop with extra-heavy pots or large frying pans. If pots over 2 quarts are necessary, set up a freestanding grill to hold the pots and place the stove under the grill.
12. Bring empty fuel containers home for disposal. Do not place them in or near fires. Empty fuel containers will explode if heated.

BULK STORAGE AND PRACTICES

Storage of bulk supplies of any chemical fuels (especially volatile fuels) is a camp maintenance function. Storage and issue of such fuel must be controlled by a responsible adult. It must be kept under lock and key in Scout camps. Quantities of gasoline in long-term camps must be stored in a properly installed underground tank with pump and/or must be in compliance with local safety standards and regulations. Camp officials must be especially alert to prevent violation of these principles by Scout leaders and their units.

Filling tanks for motor vehicles, outboard and inboard motors, and gasoline-powered saws and motors shall always be handled by someone qualified by age and training for the responsibility. All motors are turned off during filling. Enclosed bilges on boats equipped with inboard motors in enclosed spaces must be ventilated by blower for not less than four minutes (federal law) to remove fumes before engines are started. All hatches and ports should be closed during fueling and the boat reventilated when fueling is completed. No smoking or open flames are permitted while filling any fuel tanks.

Liquid petroleum storage tanks at permanent camps should be installed by experienced technicians and changed only by the gas distributors. These installations must conform to local regulations. Fuel containers should be surrounded by a chain-link fence in a cleared area.

ACTION

Local councils through round tables and volunteer training courses should make every effort to train unit leaders and assistants in the proper techniques and procedures necessary to safely operate chemical-fueled stoves and lanterns. These leaders, in turn, train and supervise youth members in these same skills and procedures.