A common term used for fuel delivery mishaps is “misdeliveries.” These misdeliveries can include fuel dispensed into the wrong tank or into a tank at the wrong address; filling a customer’s basement with fuel, not knowing the tank had been removed or had a leak; or pumping the wrong fuel into a tank at a convenience store. The cost of these misdeliveries can be large, considering that a whole house may need to be demolished to clean the surrounding soil of spilled fuel, or that many cars may need their gas tanks pumped and engines rebuilt after fuel oil has been introduced into their tanks.

Most of these misdeliveries are preventable. The driver’s knowledge and experience play a big part, but it is up to management to require consistent practices, like training, tested techniques, checklists, reporting paperwork and communication with both the customer and the driver's office.

The guidelines listed here should not be considered all-inclusive, but rather a guide for fuel delivery best practices. We strongly suggest each employer develop minimum, but stringent standards for their employees’ guidance during fuel delivery. It is management’s responsibility to ensure that each employee follows company guidelines. Prevention doesn’t necessarily require a large financial investment—just planning, training and development of procedures.

Misdeliveries at a Residence

There are several ways a misdelivery can occur at a customer’s location. Typically, the customer’s storage tank is found in the basement or buried in the yard. In either case, there may only be a fill spout visible above-ground. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to inspect the tank prior to filling. There may also be different fuels in different compartments on the delivery truck, increasing the likelihood of delivering the wrong fuel. Before and during a residential delivery, the driver should ask the following questions:

- Is the correct product being delivered to the correct location described on the delivery ticket?
- Are all indoor tanks visually inspected for general condition, connection and venting on an annual basis, and are the results documented?
- Before delivery, is the available tank capacity determined?
- Are indoor basement tanks or buried tanks, filling lines and vents piped outdoors?
- Are “vent whistlers” or other positive fill-notification alarms used when filling home basement tanks?
- Are all fill pipes and/or caps labeled or color-coded to industry standards?
- Are the delivery rates limited to tank vent capacity to reduce the possibility of tank rupture?
- Is a visual inspection of the customer’s site for changes or detrimental conditions conducted prior to filling (e.g., ignition sources near the vent pipe, plugged vent pipes, excessive vegetation, unsecured fill caps or rust or corrosion on the piping)?

Continued
**Fuel Delivery**

**Misdeliveries at a Place of Business**

When delivering fuel to business customers, such as convenience stores, the driver usually relies on color-coding or tagging of fill spouts to verify which spouts connect to the proper underground tank. However, drivers repeatedly delivering to the same locations may automatically assume they know the correct spout without physically checking each time, and it’s not uncommon for the color-coding to wear off or for physical tags to be removed. During a business delivery, the driver should remain in attendance at the point of fill during all transfer operations and ask the following questions:

- Are all tanks gauged before delivery to ensure available capacity?
- Are all fill pipes and/or caps labeled or color-coded to industry standards?
- Is the brake set on the tank truck being unloaded and are lights turned off prior to fuel transfer operations?
- Are the delivery rates limited to tank vent capacity to reduce the possibility of tank rupture?
- Have I done a visual inspection of the customer’s site for changes or detrimental conditions prior to filling (e.g., ignition sources near the vent pipe, plugged vent pipes, excessive vegetation, unsecured fill caps, or rust or corrosion on the piping)?
- Are leak monitoring well caps locked to help me avoid the assumption that they are fill pipes?

**Vehicle Safety**

The safety of the vehicle is equally as important as driver safety and should not be ignored. All truck markings should be clean, legible and in compliance with state and DOT regulations. Vehicles should receive documented pre-trip and post-trip inspections. Each truck should have a 4A:40B:C-rated dry chemical fire extinguisher on board.

Hoses and couplings should be inspected monthly and replaced if they are found to be worn, cracked or damaged. These inspections should also be documented.

The contents of each tank compartment should be clearly identified, and marked on both the truck and the shipping papers. The shipping papers should also list the amount of product in all compartments, and should be easily accessible in the driver’s cab at all times. Finally, delivery trucks should contain a copy of the North American Emergency Response Guidebook #115.

Tank ladders and catwalks should have an abrasive walking surface and be maintained in good condition.

**Driver Safety**

Drivers usually work independently while delivering the product. That makes it even more important to safeguard all aspects of the delivery process.

Ensure that all delivery personnel are trained in the safe operation of equipment and delivery procedures. Drivers should also be taught emergency procedures and provided with emergency phone numbers. All drivers should receive hazardous material training every three years, at minimum. They should have a valid commercial driver’s license (CDL), and their motor vehicle records should be reviewed annually. DOT-required drug testing should be current and all records should be maintained.

**For Additional Information**

- National Fire Protection Agency: [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
  - NFPA 30®—Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code
- Independent Petroleum Association of America: [www.ipaa.org](http://www.ipaa.org)
- Department of Transportation: [www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov)