



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

P.O. Box 42560 • Olympia, Washington 98504-2560 • (360) 902-1800

DATE: 04/02/2020

TO: Office of the Code Reviser

FROM:

Derek I. Sandison, Director

SUBJECT: Policy Statement PP-20-0001 – Gasoline Volatility Requirements Enforcement in April 2020

On April 1, 2020, a policy statement regarding the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) delaying enforcement of summer gasoline volatility specifications was signed. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated precautions, fuel demand has decreased substantially across the nation. Fuel suppliers are currently storing more of the winter blend high volatility gasoline than anticipated. This situation is preventing fuel suppliers from transitioning the supply to summer lower volatility gasoline on the timeline required by ASTM standards. Therefore, in order to avoid potential fuel supply disruptions, WSDA will continue to allow winter blend high volatility gasoline to move through the supply chain from April 1 – April 30, 2020.

A copy of the policy statement may be obtained by accessing our website or by contacting:

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POLICY STATEMENT

Number: PP-20-0001

Subject: Gasoline Volatility Requirements Enforcement in April 2020

Supersedes: Not Applicable

Contact: Tim Elliott, Motor Fuel Quality and Enforcement Manager
Email: telliott@agr.wa.gov Phone: (360) 902-1984

Approved By:

Derek I. Sandison, Director

Date Approved: April 1, 2020

The Washington State Dept. of Agriculture (WSDA) will continue to allow winter blend high volatility gasoline to be distributed and sold from April 1 – April 30, 2020 in order to avoid potential gasoline supply disruptions.

Background: Volatility is the property of a liquid fuel that defines its evaporation characteristics. ASTM International (ASTM) establishes national volatility specifications for fuel and standard testing procedures. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) establishes volatility control periods that prohibit the sale, supply, dispensing or transport of gasoline whose volatility exceeds standards. The regulations specify the volatility standard by geographical area and time period in which the gasoline is intended to be dispensed to motor vehicles.

On March 27, 2020, EPA, in consultation with the U.S. Department of Energy, issued a waiver of certain fuel volatility standards to address oversupply issues for winter high volatility fuels (40 C.F.R. Section 80.27). The federal agencies determined that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated precautions, fuel demand has decreased substantially across the nation, and suppliers are currently storing more of the winter blend high volatility gasoline than anticipated. This situation could prevent fuel suppliers from being able to turn over the supply to summer lower volatility fuels on the timeline required by the standards and prevent the distribution of an adequate supply of compliant gasoline to consumers.

WSDA's fuel volatility standards, published under chapter 16-662 WAC, currently require a transition to lower volatility gasoline beginning April 1, with another step down scheduled for May 1.

In order to avoid potential fuel supply disruptions, WSDA will continue to allow winter blend high volatility gasoline to be distributed and sold by enforcing the March ASTM D4814 Class E-5/D-4 requirements on gasoline in the distribution system and at retail locations from April 1, 2020

through April 30, 2020, under the following conditions:

- The gasoline was produced before April 1, 2020.
- The gasoline is not blended with butane at the terminal.

WSDA will continue to coordinate with the Department of Ecology and Department of Commerce's Energy Emergency Management Director to ensure that impacts to air quality are minimized and that the transition of the fuel supply is implemented consistent with the needs of the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (ESF-12).