

New EPA Mandated Fuel



Well classic car fans, your friendly EPA is at it again. As many of you know, we have had MBTE in our fuel since about 1999. That enabled this wondrous stuff to leach quickly into water supplies and caused countless \$\$ in clean up costs. Moreover, we lost between three to five miles per gallon in fuel mileage. The major oil companies will remove all MBTE from fuel effective March 31, 2006. In its place will be Ethanol. Ethanol is grain alcohol, which unlike regular gasoline, mixes very well with water! Initially, a 10% Ethanol mix will be sold at all fueling locations in New England starting April 1st, 2006

Eventually, all the fuel you will purchase will be E-85 which is a fuel mix of gasoline and Ethanol. You have noticed price increases at the pump lately. The average price for regular fuel is now \$2.45 per gallon for regular fuel. People who don't know how to think will naturally blame President Bush. People who know how to think will blame the EPA as well they should!

Many of you who were driving in the early 70's will remember Gasohol and all of the sooty spark plug problems, drivability problems, along with countless experiences with vapor lock associated with it. The bottom line is, if you experience drivability problems with you classic this spring, it's probably nothing more than inferior fuel that you can do nothing about. My gut feeling is that they can never supply enough Ethanol to satisfy fuel demand, and the storage problems will be catastrophic in terms of cost. The Mobil station near my home was retrofitted to accommodate the new fuel this past week.

I am in the process of figuring a solution (as I have done in the past). I'll let all of you know what I come up with. The first thing that comes to mind is that you had better be running with stainless steel fuel lines and multi-fuel fuel line hose with EFI type clamps, but that is just the



tip of the iceberg. New carburetor kits should be installed if you carburetor has not been rebuilt in the past few years. Even the newer cars built in the last few years will experience problems.

Just remember this: The EPA is a Federal Agency! No air will ever be clean enough... ever. Why? They need a job... that's why!

I contacted Exxon/Mobil today. It's doubtful that we will ever go to huge percentages of ethanol because of the hard-start or no-start situations that would surely result in the winter.

The bad news is that classic cars will now have to have hardened valves, seats, and upper compression rings on the pistons. Original engines will have problems. Also, all rubber and sealing parts in the fuel system will have had to have been made within the last five years, or they will fail. Also, water separates ethanol from gasoline, so car owners will have to be sure there is no water in the fuel system. A can of dry gas now and then should alleviate the problem. Their representative further stated that cars should be put away in the winter with a full tank of fuel or condensation will result.

That's the latest. We will survive with a few modifications.

Dennis Vieira

