

Gassing Up? - Get OFF!

The tank is running low so you pull into a service station next to a pump. Down goes the kickstand. The next few things you do could save your life.

▶ Turn off your motor

If gasoline were to spill as you bring the nozzle to the tank or as a result of overflow or as you take the nozzle out of the tank, you risk setting it ablaze. You should be concerned not just about a hot engine or exhaust pipes, but also any electrical system.

▶ Take your helmet off

If your helmet is on you cannot determine if a fire has started as easily as you can without it and, particularly if the helmet is attached to the bike with an audio system cord, you cannot evacuate the area quickly should a fire be detected.

▶ Get OFF your motorcycle

For some reason this step seems to be ignored more often than any other. Maybe it 'looks' good. Maybe it's just too much work to get off when you're tired. Whatever, putting fuel into your tank while you're straddling the bike is dangerous! If there is a gasoline spill your crotch will get wet. Then what do you do?

▶ Fill the tank, but not to the top

Gasoline expands as it warms up. Some gas tanks are not sealed units and if you fill them to the top they can easily leak. Some motorcycles have dual (side-by-side) tanks that are connected internally. There is a 'secret' you should know about filling these bikes - when putting gasoline into the higher tank WATCH the level in the lower one. Since you are on your side stand the bike is leaning and overflow from the higher tank will go to the lower one. Obviously, with this kind of system you cannot fill the highest tank without overfilling the lower one. This is one reason why owners of these bikes tend to sit on them when they fill up - to keep the bike vertical so they can load as much gasoline as possible. But it's obvious why you shouldn't do so (odds are good you will stop and put your side stand down before you have burned up enough gasoline to prevent leakage.)

▶ Do not smoke within 20 feet of a gas pump

▶ Keep your ignition switch in the OFF position any time your filler cap is off your tank.

(Especially do not use your CB.)

Earlier I asked what you would do if gasoline spilled onto your crotch. Actually, I should have asked what you would do if it spilled on any part of you or your clothes. This is so important I will offer my own suggestions at this point.

▶ **DRENCH** with water!

▶ **THEN** take that article of clothing **OFF!!**

▶ **DO NOT WALK IF THERE IS GASOLINE ON YOUR CLOTHES!!!**

Static electricity can easily ignite gasoline fumes.

Allow wet clothes to dry OUTSIDE. If you happen to be at home, DO NOT PUT THESE CLOTHES INTO A WASHER/DRYER!!!!

If you can smell gasoline on them there is enough to ignite.