

// Plastic jerry cans intended for use with fuel are acceptable.

Photo: CAA



FUEL – A DANGEROUS ‘GOOD’ FOR GOOD REASON

A recent report to the CAA has illustrated the dangers of mishandling fuel.

A recent aviation-related concern* was reported to the CAA after the submitter watched a farmer filling old 20-litre pesticide containers with jet fuel for an agricultural pilot.

Why should this be a ‘concern’? Well, there are several problems, including that the fuel may degrade the container material.

There’s also the danger of residual pesticide or other contamination remaining in the container, mixing with the fuel – even the water used to clean the contaminant out, can then itself be a contaminant.

If you use non-standard jerry cans, the fuel can degrade the gasket in the cap making it brittle to the point where it disintegrates.

According to the Good Aviation Practice booklet, *Fuel management*, the fragments could then be “tipped into the fuel tank along with fuel. Over time [they] can either clog the tank outlet or the fuel system filter(s). Or [they] can turn to mush... also resulting in clogging of the filter”.

Because of the lethal danger presented by fuel if it’s stored and/or carried improperly, there are lots of musts and shoulds in its handling.

Carriage of fuel in aircraft

Regardless of whether it’s Jet A-1 or Avgas, or the purpose for which it’s being carried, it’s regarded as a dangerous good (DG) – and it must be carried in accordance with Part 92 and with the ICAO *Technical Instructions*. This applies to all flights, regardless of whether they’re private or commercial, or what flight rules they’re operating under.

One of the requirements is that fuel be carried in containers specifically designed and manufactured to carry fuel.

Plastic jerry cans intended for use with fuel are acceptable.

They must be less than five years old, and approved for carriage by air. That’s indicated by the UN code stamped or embossed on the container, which will look something like:

 3H1/Y/1.4/150/20/NL/VL824

If your container doesn’t have a code like this, it cannot be used for carrying fuel on aircraft.

If you’re a certificated operator, your exposition must include your DG procedures.

Similar requirements apply to the road transport of fuel. For instance, containers must be designed specifically for carrying fuel, plastic containers must be no more than five years old, and if the type of fuel carried in a particular container changes, be very, very careful in cleaning the container first. The containers must be marked and labelled identifying the fuel being carried. 

Comments or queries?

Email jim.finlayson@caa.govt.nz.

// UPDATED POSTER

On the back cover of this issue of *Vector*, you’ll find our updated dangerous goods poster. You can cut it from the magazine and use for future reference, or email publications@caa.govt.nz for your free copies, available in both A4 and A3 sizes.

* aviation.govt.nz/safety/aviation-concerns/