
Storage of petrol and petrol-powered tools

Could your mower bring down the church?

We have found several churches storing petrol-driven mowers in boiler rooms where the burner flame could ignite any petrol vapour leaking from the mower with explosive effect!

We offer this advice to help churches avoid such a disaster. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Company also has its requirements and there are legal limits on petrol storage, which you should know about. In summary:

- **Do not store petrol-powered tools and fuel in any part of a church building.** They are best stored in a separate shed, well secured, that has no ignition source present. See also Advice Leaflet 41 on the construction and siting of sheds relative to other buildings.
- **If a mower has to be stored in part of the church, it should be drained of fuel and this should be done outdoors**
- Petrol can only be stored in the fuel tank of the tool(s) and in approved containers, up to a maximum of 30 litres of fuel, as follows.

Type of container	Maximum quantity of petrol per container	Maximum number of containers
metal	20 litres	1 full
plastic	10 litres	3 full

- To keep more than 30 litres you will need to notify the local Petroleum Enforcement Authority.
- Always refill petrol-powered tools in the open air; never inside any building. Refill well away from any ignition source and with the engine turned off.
- If it is impossible to store mowers etc. in their own shed, then they should be kept in their own storage area. It must have ventilation at high and low level to remove vapour resulting from a leak. It should be separated from the rest of the building by walls and ceiling of 1-hour fire resistance. These walls must be solid without any opening, such as a door, through which petrol vapour could pass into the building. Access should be from outside only and be kept well secured except when the tools are being removed or replaced.
- Exclude any source of ignition from the storage area, e.g. electrical equipment.
- A foam extinguisher should be available in the area or from nearby.

Additional information and advice is available from the DAC team:

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