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## NEWS

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# Cell Phones a Hazard around the Pumps!

**From Pioneer Express**

Pioneer Petroleums recently garnered high praise from a government safety official for its quick response to an advisory about the danger of using cellular phones around gas pumps.

John Wastle, chief engineer at Ontario's Fuel Safety Division at the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, congratulated Pioneer for promptly alerting its Agents and customers about the potential hazard after he received a call from a customer using a cell phone at a Hamilton, Ont. Pioneer station.

The customer balked when he was asked by an attendant to move away from the pumps. The attendant was following the information in the advisory. The customer didn't accept the attendant's explanations and was directed to call John Wastle.

Jim Woods, Pioneer's Manager of Construction and Development, says it's common for motorists to pull into a gas station to make a few calls on their cell phone, unaware of the dangers posed by their proximity to the gas pumps.

"The bottom line is that any source of ignition within 10 feet of a gas pump is bad news," says Jim.

"When (Fuel Safety) issued this advisory, we talked to them and found that they actually had done some testing and there were certain models of cell phones that could produce a spark. With this kind of proof, we had to do something about it."

The main threat comes from sparks that can be generated by the battery inside the cell phone. To a lesser extent, radiant heat is another potential source of danger.

Wastle notes that cell phone manuals include information about the hazard.

He says Agents and employees have been instructed a few simple rules:

   
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1. If you see someone using a cell phone within 10 feet of where gasoline or other fuels are being dispensed, treat it as if the person was smoking.
2. Turn off the dispenser and politely but firmly tell the person to stop using their phone or move more than 10 feet away from the pumps.
3. If the person is uncooperative, advise them to call the province's Fuel Safety Division for an explanation about why it is unsafe to use their cell phones near gas pumps.

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