



A common problem experienced by motorists is water contamination in petrol. This Fuel News identifies how water can get into petrol, what can happen when it does and how to remove it from a car's fuel system.

WHAT DOES WATER IN PETROL LOOK LIKE?

Water does not mix with petrol and will readily settle to the bottom to form a distinct layer, which may be clear but usually looks rusty or dirty. Water's presence in petrol can be confirmed by using water finding paste. If the layer at the bottom of a petrol sample does not give a reaction with water finding paste then it is probably not water and a sample should be sent to a laboratory for analysis.

HOW DOES WATER GET INTO PETROL?

- Through poorly sealing caps on storage tanks. Inspect caps regularly to ensure that they are fitted securely and that the seals have not broken or perished.
- Through broken vents. Inspect vents regularly for cracks or corrosion particularly at ground level.
- Through tank leaks. If water continually appears in the fuel even with the above precautions a pressure test is needed to find out if the tank has a hole that is allowing ground water to enter.
- From condensation. This is a problem we have to live with. It will always occur as the tank breathes and will be greatest during summer and in humid areas.
- From a delivery. Very rarely, petrol may be contaminated with water when delivered. After sufficient time has been allowed for the fuel to settle (approx. 2 hours), the tank should be checked with water finding paste after each delivery to make sure that water is not in the bottom of the tank.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WATER GETS INTO A VEHICLE FUEL TANK?

If the water gets into the fuel line it will cause the car to run rough and eventually stall. It may also damage fuel injection system components.

HOW IS WATER REMOVED FROM A FUEL SYSTEM?

To remove water, drain the fuel tank, flush the fuel lines with fresh fuel and replace the fuel filter. In most cases it is not necessary to dismantle the carburetor as any water present will be drawn through after the initial start.

Problems resulting from water in petrol are time consuming, a nuisance to all, and sometimes very expensive. Prevention is the best cure.

**For further information, please call the BP Lubricants and Fuel
Technical Helpline 1300 139 700 local call
or visit www.bp.com.au/fuelnews**