

Board Action Area 7: Environment, Health and Safety

Helping develop and maintain a world-class safety, public health, and environmental protection record is one of the Federal government's most important roles in supporting the industry's future growth. The Federal government has a number of comprehensive and proactive public health, safety, and environmental protection programs involving many agencies. As biofuels come into greater contact with our infrastructure as their use increases, and as innovation produces fuels that are not currently in wide use (such as green hydrocarbon fuels or biobutanol), these programs will need to understand and manage any associated risks. This will require maintaining and upgrading a wide range of expertise including biofuels, fire protection, human health exposure, environmental, occupational safety and health and transportation.

Next Steps

Biofuels have been safely produced, transported, and used in the U.S. for decades and have hazard characteristics similar to those of gasoline (see Figure 7). While many of the characteristics of various biofuels are already known and documented in material safety data sheets, the broader application of these fuels, as well as entry into service of advanced fuels not

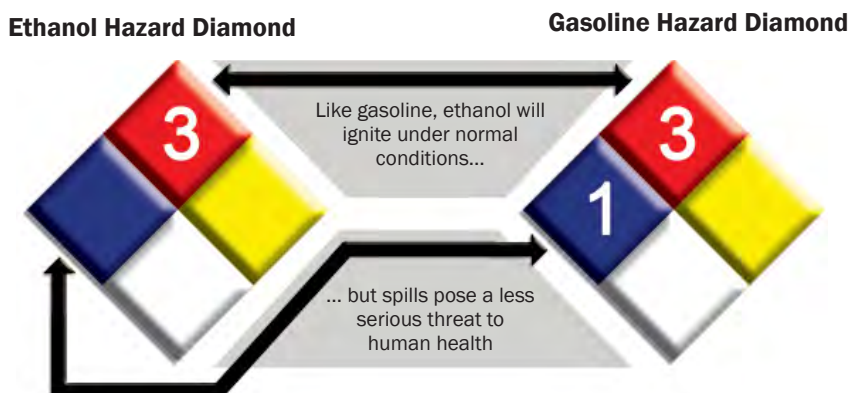
currently in use, will require attention to anticipate risks, control potential hazards, and prevent mishaps. This requires an approach to health and safety that comprehensively protects public health and worker safety, while doing so without excessively constraining businesses serving the biofuels supply chain.

Biomass R&D Board Actions

The Board will establish an interagency working group to benchmark agricultural and biofuels industry successes and practices.

- The group will inventory the Federal government's activities and areas of jurisdiction with respect to public health, safety, and environmental protection.
- It will review and summarize potential public health, safety, and environmental issues related to the life-cycle of biofuels and identify research needs and potential mitigation options.
- This information will be used to conduct outreach to the public, industry, and other entities in the biofuels economy as well as to prioritize Federal government research in these areas.

Figure 7: Ethanol and gasoline hazard diamonds



Source: National Fire Protection Association

Each corner of the diamond represents a health hazard



Each color is rated on a scale from 0 (no hazard; normal substance) to 4 (severe risk)