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Visit the National Tank Truck Carriers, Inc. at

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U.S. Department
of Transportation
Pipeline and
Hazardous Materials
Safety Administration



WET LINES

Awareness for
Emergency
Responders



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Pipeline and
Hazardous Materials
Safety Administration



The U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, the National Tank Truck Carriers, Inc., the National Association of State Fire Marshals, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs are working together to alert first responders of the potential danger associated with the transportation of flammable liquids in unprotected product piping on cargo tank motor vehicles.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has the responsibility to establish and manage a national safety program that will minimize the risks to life and property inherent in the commercial transportation of hazardous materials.

The National Tank Truck Carriers, Inc. (NTTC) is a trade association composed of approximately 200 trucking companies which specialize in the nationwide distribution of bulk liquids, industrial gases, and dry products in cargo tank vehicles. Part of NTTC's mission is to enhance the safety of the industry by providing relevant and useful information to the carrier industry on a timely basis.

The National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) comprises the most senior fire officials in the United States. State Fire Marshals' responsibilities vary from state to state, but Marshals tend to be responsible for fire safety code adoption and enforcement, fire and arson investigation, fire incident data reporting and analysis, public education and advising Governors and State Legislatures on fire protection, as well as hazardous materials incident responses.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) is a powerful network of nearly 13,000 chief fire and emergency officers. Their members are the world's leading experts in fire fighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety legislation.

Wetlines are product piping located beneath the cargo tank (MC 306, MC 307, DOT 406, and DOT 407 cargo tanks) that are used for bottom loading of gasoline or other petroleum products. A 9,000-gallon cargo tank may contain five separate compartments, allowing more than one product to be transported. Each compartment has its own wetline. Wetlines are designed to break off if struck by an object or another vehicle, rather than compromise the integrity of the cargo tank shell and risk losing the contents of the entire container or compartment.

An additional benefit of wetlines is that drivers and loaders don't have to climb on top of the tanker as often, resulting in fewer deaths or injuries from slips and falls.

Wetlines may remain filled with flammable product after loading or unloading. Five-compartment tank wetlines typically contain 30-50 gallons of the flammable

liquid. In the event that another vehicle strikes the side of a trailer, the impact would likely detach unprotected wetlines. The detached wetlines may release their entire contents and care should be taken to prevent fire. A gasoline spill of 50 gallons

can create a fire over an area of up to 5,000 square feet if ignited. If not extinguished immediately, the fire could result in significant loss of life, or damage to property or the environment.

First responders should assume that wetlines contain flammable liquid when responding to incidents involving cargo tank vehicles, and take measures to limit exposure to the product during their response. Wetlines are designed to break off from the cargo tank during a collision yet leave the internal tank emergency valve operational to



Wetlines, like those shown here, are designed to break off in the event of an accident, preventing larger spills. Even so, 30-50 gallons of flammable liquid may be released.

prevent spillage from the tank. Wetlines that don't contain flammable liquid may still contain flammable vapors, and responders should avoid potential ignition sources during the initial response.