Flammable and Combustible Liquids – Container Sizing

NFPA 30, *Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code*, published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), requires that flammable and combustible liquids be stored in approved containers, portable tanks, and Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs). In addition, the code establishes quantity limits for various container types and liquid classes. This handout summarizes the quantity limits set by the 2015 revision of the code.

**Containers**

NFPA 30 recognizes several different container materials as acceptable for storing flammable and combustible liquids, including glass, metal, and polyethylene.

**Glass**

Glass containers are limited to a maximum capacity of:

- 1 pt (0.5 L) of Class IA or 1 qt (1 L) of Class IB. However, Class IA and IB liquids may be packaged in glass containers having a capacity not more than 1.3 gal (5 L), when the liquid’s purity would be compromised by storage in metal containers or where the liquid is corrosive to metals.
- 1.3 gal (5 L) of Class IC and Class II.
- 5.3 gal (20 L) of Class III liquids.

**Metal**

Metal containers are limited to a maximum capacity of:

- 1.3 gal (5 L) of Class IA liquids.
- 5.3 gal (20 L) of Class IB, Class IC, Class II, or Class III liquids.

**Polyethylene**

Polyethylene containers are limited to a maximum capacity of:

- 1.3 gal (5 L) of Class IA.
- 5.3 gal (20 L) of Class IB and Class IC.
- 119 gal (450 L) of Class II and Class III liquids.

**Safety Cans**

Safety cans are listed containers having a spring-closing lid and spout cover and so designed that it will safely relieve internal pressure when subjected to fire exposure. These containers are limited to a maximum capacity of:

- 2.6 gal (10 L) of Class IA.
- 5.3 gal (20 L) of Class IB, Class IC, Class II, or Class III liquids.
Drums

- Metal drums are limited to a maximum capacity of 119 gal (450 L) for all classifications.
- Fiber drums are limited to a maximum capacity of 119 gal (450 L) of Class II and III liquids. They are not permitted for the storage of Class I liquids.

Portable Tanks and IBCs

- Metal portable tanks and IBCs are limited to a maximum capacity of 793 gal (3,000 L) for all classifications.
- Rigid plastic IBCs are limited to a maximum capacity of 793 gal (3,000 L) of Class II and III liquids. They are not permitted for the storage of Class I liquids.

Consumer Products

Common consumer products, such as medicine, foods, cosmetics, and beverages, are exempt from the package size limitations of NFPA 30 when they are packaged in a method that is acceptable for retail sales.

Prohibited Containers

FPA 30 does not permit flammable and combustible liquids to be stored in non-approved containers, bag-in-box containers, composite IBCs with flexible receptacles, or flexible IBCs unless protected with a fire protection system(s) designed specifically for the container and liquids present.

Contact

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