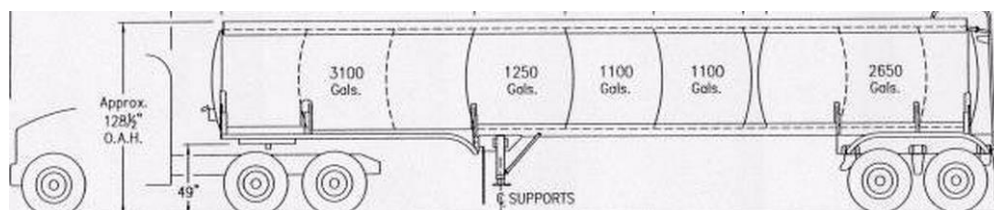


Petrol Station Mix ups

Another cause of misfuelling is occasions where petrol stations dispense the wrong fuel, there are a number of ways this can happen.

1) Fuel tankers are made up of compartments, see below



Fuel in the UK comes from either 1 of the 7 fuel refineries, or a regional fuel farm, when the trucks are filling up it is done to a customers order (petrol station) and the tanker is loaded accordingly, a tanker can have up to 10 compartments of various sizes and can be filled with any combination of product, for instance, diesel, premium diesel, red diesel, ultra-low sulphur diesel, petrol, premium petrol, and 1 tanker may drop off at a number of different petrol stations

The first opportunity for a misfuel is when the tanker is loaded as the compartments are not always used for the same product, misfuelling here is rare since they have strict protocol on following a set procedure to ensure it does not happen, since a full tanker can carry £60.000 of fuel there is a watchful eye kept on the process

The second and most common cause is the fuel being delivered into the wrong tanks at the petrol station, this is much easier than it sounds,



These are fuel drop-off taps on the tanker, the driver must know what fuel will come out of what tap, based on his cargo manifest.

He then has to find the corresponding filling point at the petrol station, connect a hose between the 2 and let gravity do its job.

I have spoken to a few tanker drivers in my travels and misfuelling often comes up in conversation, especially since its usually when I am doing a fuel drain in a liveried wrong fuel van at a forecourt, it is something they worry about and apart from a crash it is every tanker drivers worst nightmare, from what I could deduce it is not a sackable offence if it is reported immediately (and the wrong fuel is not dispensed at the pumps), theoretically if procedure is followed exactly it would be impossible to drop the wrong fuel into the wrong tanks, if it does occur they are to immediately tell the premises manager, followed by a sheepish call to the refinery transport manager.

A specialist tanker will then come and suck out the affected tanks, the fuel is returned to the refinery and put back into the refining process, the petrol station will not be charged for the delivery, and the tanker driver will have to deal an increase in verbal abuse in the workplace.

If the mistake goes unnoticed and the fuel is dispensed the results will at least make the local news, and on a quiet news-day will even make national TV.

Because a car will often get a few miles on the wrong fuel it is not something that is obvious right away, and often since it is just 1 or 2 pumps that get affected it can go undetected longer than many would think, it is often spotted by AA and RAC patrolmen who notice a sudden local surge in local fuel related breakdowns, or by a nearby mechanic.

The only possible excuse a Tanker driver will have for this sort of situation is that the markings had been incorrect on the receiving tanks.

Once reported back to the petrol station it is simple to check if the petrol is petrol or the diesel is diesel, filling a fuel can and having a quick sniff will quickly determine what is what.

Once it gets this far a petrol station will show its true colours in the customer care arena, some will trawl CCTV footage of the affected pumps and go to lengths to contact every

person affected, even using the DVLA database to track down number plates, (thanks to forecourt fuel theft drive offs every car, driver and number plate is captured on CCTV from about 10 different angles and directions in high quality CCTV).

In a well-managed incident the fuel company would swing into action, providing hire cars as needed , recovering broken down cars and getting them fixed/drained and returned to the customer, ideally with a full tank of the right fuel, well managed it could even be considered a good will exercise, if the fuel company tries to wiggle out of the problem or worse even deny it happened it causes frustration, inconvenience and expense for the consumer.

A few years ago in a well-documented case a major national supermarket was successfully sued by a van driver for serving the wrong fuel, the supermarket only paid *after* a warrant had been issued to seize thousands of pounds of alcohol from the supermarket for non-payment after losing a court case brought by the van driver.

Source: <https://www.fuelfixer.co.uk/petrol-station-mix-ups>