

Plant

ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

CHRYSLER BUILDING
405 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK October 27, 1936

SAFETY COMMITTEE

O. B. LEWIS
CHAIRMAN

Dr. R. A. Kehoe
University of Cincinnati
Eden and Bethesda Avenues
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

H. K. Ball, our safety man in Boston, reports a most unusual accident which occurred at the Cities Service Refining Company, East Braintree, Massachusetts. The paragraph in his letter devoted to this follows:

"In tank cleaning a refinery crew is made up of a special class of laborers who at other times devote themselves to maintenance work. In cleaning a tank, one bottom sheet is removed, leaving an opening 20 feet by 5 feet at the bottom of the tank for airing. Walls are brushed down in a wet state and the sludge shovelled out and buried. It is against regulations to use water in these tanks. A few years ago a tank bottom was being washed with water when an explosion occurred injuring several. The only explanation was that static electricity was set up by friction of water passing through the nozzle. There were enough vapors present caused by steaming of the fuel oil B.S. to form an explosive mixture. (This point should be considered in washing down any tanks with water. If we are to recommend the use of water, it should be only under the condition that the nozzle is grounded to the tank)."

We will inquire further into this subject as we get around the various oil companies. I wonder if you have any comments to make.

Very truly yours,

O. B. Lewis