

March 31, 1932

Mr. R. B. Pierce
Manager - Refining Dept.
Louisiana Oil Refining Cor.
Schreveport, La.

My dear Mr. Pierce:

Your letter of March 22nd addressed to the Medical Department of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation, has been referred to me for reply. After several years of observation, I think it is entirely proper to say that the action of Ethyl Gasoline upon the skin or eyes of an individual are in no wise different from that of ordinary gasoline. In fact, the ingredients of Ethyl fluid are not as irritating to the skin as is gasoline itself while in the blended gasoline the concentration of these materials is so low as to be insignificant. Thus there is no reason to fear that any delayed action may follow exposure of the skin or eyes to such gasoline. You are fully aware of the irritating effects of gasoline upon the skin and of its uncomfortable effects when spilled or splashed in the eyes. The greatest danger in the latter case is that the person who gets gasoline in his eye begins to rub the eye and in so doing is likely to introduce foreign substances such as dust and grime which may have a very bad effect upon the eye. Ulcers of the cornea occasionally occur as a result of such abrasion. Otherwise, no harmful effect is to be expected.

The precautionary instructions for the handling of Ethyl gasoline have been issued with the idea of limiting skin exposure to gasoline so far as possible. It was feared early in the history of the commerce, that the slow minute absorption of lead out of gasoline over a long period of time, might eventually produce cases of chronic lead poisoning. It is now quite clear that the dangers which were feared, have not materialized and there is now no experimental or clinical reason for believing that significant quantities of lead may be absorbed as a result of exposure of the skin to Ethyl gasoline. Nevertheless, since it is not wise to handle gasolines carelessly and since there is a pronounced injurious effect upon the skin from contact with gasoline, it has been considered by all persons a wise precautionary measure to continue to warn gasoline handlers against careless and sloppy handling of Ethyl gasoline.

I trust that the above comment answers your questions. If there are any further matters in which I may be able to give you information, I shall be pleased to do so.

Very truly yours,

RK:IS