

October 28, 1930

Mr. A. E. Mittnacht,  
Ethyl Gasoline Corp.,  
135 E. 42nd St.,  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Mittnacht:

Thanks very much for your letter of October 24 with the report from Mr. Graham. I am returning the pictures to you but am keeping the copy of the report.

I have on my desk a rather full report of the whole matter, made by my Dr. Schradin whom I dispatched to Enid almost immediately upon receiving the report of the fire. I feared somewhat the appearance of delayed symptoms in men who were exposed, thinking that any inhalation of fumes would be more likely to produce injury twenty-four to forty-eight hours after the exposure rather than immediately. Schradin examined the whole field rather carefully and made a detailed report of the occurrence of the fire and of its consequences to the equipment and to the surrounding objects. At the same time he talked with the men and gave each man who had been exposed a physical examination.

The report as submitted by Mr. Graham corresponds almost exactly with the report which I have from Dr. Schradin, and I have been very pleasantly surprised to see that the danger from fire is apparently very much less than I would have anticipated. Incidentally, Dr. Schradin brought back to me a copy of the pictures which you have sent me. I asked him to do this if he could, for the reason that I wanted as full information as possible on everything that might be expected to occur, and on everything that had actually happened. I have let the entire matter ride, assuming that I would in all probability receive a report from you.

I think there are several lessons to be learned from this fire, and I believe that Mr. Graham's suggestions are excellent ones. I had considered recommending two of the things which he has suggested. It is obvious that any gasoline line with a vapor lock which interferes with the pumping, may be a rather serious matter, and I believe that this should be avoided. I can not but feel however, that the most important thing to be learned from this fire is that an electrically driven pump in the vicinity of gasoline vapors is a danger which should not be permitted to occur. Considering the precautions which are taken in this

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matter at some refineries (apparently the result of experience), it seems to me that it is foolhardy to tempt providence with electrical equipment of this kind. According to Dr. Schradin the switch on this motor was not an oil switch. In that respect he did not agree entirely with Mr. Graham. As to which may be right I should not venture to say, but if there was an oil switch it only makes more clear that even such precautions as these are not adequate in dealing with electrically driven pumps. It would seem to me that the chance for some spark is always present when a motor is being used, and I should say that such a motor should not be used.

As to the sprinkling system, I do not regard myself as sufficiently expert to decide the point, but I should be exceedingly skeptical as to whether any sprinkling system of the customary type would have any appreciable effect upon either a gasoline or Ethyl Fluid fire. Such a system would have to release a veritable flood, I should think, in order to be effective at all. In fact, if I am not mistaken, the foamite system has been devised largely because water does not serve as a suitable extinguishing medium. Undoubtedly we should have much more expert opinion on this than I can give you, but my present reaction does not favor requiring the introduction of such a sprinkler system unless we can be shown that such a system is likely to be effective.

Very truly yours,

RAK:EJ

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# ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

CHRYSLER BUILDING  
135 EAST 42ND STREET

NEW YORK October 24, 1930.

INTER-OFFICE  
CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Robert A. Kehoe

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

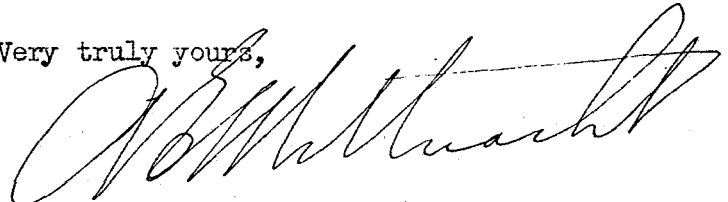
Attached hereto is copy of a report from field representative Bob Graham on the fire at the Champlin Refining Company's plant at Enid. The original photographs are also attached. I would thank you to please return the latter after they have served your purpose as they are the only copies we have and I wish to send them around to some of our other people.

It would seem to me that we do not have a great deal to fear from fire because it apparently takes considerable heat to cause the drums to explode and once this has happened, the ETHYL Fluid apparently burns rather completely.

What do you think of Bob Graham's suggestion for installation of a sprinkler system at mixing points? This would probably be quite an expense in some instances, but could doubtless be done if you think it necessary. I think, in any case, we should write our division managers recommending that wherever possible a sprinkler be put in, at least on new installations.

Before taking any action, however, I would appreciate your comments and suggestions on this whole situation.

Very truly yours,



C:M

P.S. What do you think of his other suggestion of not permitting electrical pumps to be used but only those that are powered by steam?

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