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Underwriters Laboratories Announces Support For Authorities Having Jurisdiction Who Decide To Permit The Use Of Existing UL Listed Gasoline Dispensers With Automobile Fuel Containing Up To A Maximum Of 15% Ethanol

Northbrook, Ill., February 19, 2009 -- Underwriters Laboratories (UL), a world leader in independent product safety testing and certification, announced today that it supports Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) who decide to permit legacy system dispensers, Listed to UL 87 and currently installed in the market, to be used with fuel blends containing a maximum ethanol content of 15 percent. UL stresses that existing fuel dispensers certified under UL 87 were for intended use with ethanol blends up to E10, which is the current legal limit for non-flex fuel vehicles in the United States under the federal Clean Air Act. However, data the company has gathered as part of the organization's ongoing research to investigate the impact of using higher ethanol blends in fuel dispensing systems supports that existing dispensers can be used with ethanol blends up to 15 percent. AHJs are advised to consult with the dispenser manufacturer to confirm that the dispenser is compatible with the fuel to be dispensed.

UL researchers found that using equipment certified to UL 87 to dispense ethanol blends with a maximum ethanol content of 15 percent should not result in critical safety concerns. However, the company stressed that dispensers pumping this higher percentage of ethanol should be subject to regular inspection and preventative maintenance as specified by the dispenser manufacturer for the blend of fuel being dispensed because the potential for degradation of the metals and materials (e.g., plastics, elastomers and composites) used in a dispensing system increases as the percentage of ethanol increases.

"UL determined that there is no significant incremental risk of damage between E10 and fuels with a maximum of 15 percent ethanol. This conclusion was reached after careful examination of the effects of varying levels of ethanol on components," said John Drengenberg, Consumer Affairs Manager for UL. "We will continue to evaluate test and field findings, as well as the scientific literature, as it becomes available and make this information available to AHJs."

AHJs are the local regulatory and approval entities that make the final determination of the acceptance of fuel dispensing devices. UL makes its research findings available to the AHJs for their consideration.

Standard UL 87 is used by UL research and testing staff members to evaluate fuel dispenser systems and their component parts for use with motor fuels with ethanol blends up to E10. Under normal business conditions, E10 at the dispenser can vary from about seven to 13 percent ethanol. Subject 87A is used to evaluate dispensers and components to be used with ethanol fuel blends up to a maximum of E85.

Over the past 15 years the body of knowledge about ethanol has increased, compelling UL to invest more than \$1 million to develop requirements to test and certify dispensing systems for ethanol fuel blends up to E85. UL operates as an independent entity with its sole focus on public safety. UL works with all participants as a neutral party to ensure the safest possible outcome for those who work with and rely on the products at issue.

"UL continues to support technological advancements, while protecting safety. That is why we have invested resources and effort that go far beyond any business benefit UL might gain from this work to support the ethanol industry's desire to have safety certification requirements established for E85 fuel dispensers," said Drengenberg.

