



EPA Compliant Fuel Line Components from Sierra

The use of ethanol-blended gasoline in our nation's fuel supply is in the news again. On Friday, the EPA announced that gasoline with up to 15% ethanol (or E15) is approved for use in all cars made after the year 2000.

This is news that boaters must be aware of. While the nation's automotive fleet might be able to tolerate E15 gas, many marine engines and fuel systems, especially in older vessels, will notice the difference. When the use of ethanol-blended gasoline was first introduced, boaters were among the first to have to deal with the potentially destructive effects of ethanol in the fuel. Rubber hoses and fittings, even some older fiberglass gas tanks, came under attack from the increased levels of alcohol. Because ethanol will absorb water when stored for more than a couple of weeks (a common occurrence for many boats and motors), water in the fuel system caused major engine issues. And the corrosive nature of alcohol scoured metal gas tanks, resulting in debris in the fuel and clogged fuel filters.

While a higher percentage of ethanol in gasoline will undeniably increase its harmful effects, just what to expect is unclear. Will all fuel now contain 15% ethanol? No, it will not. However, it will be more difficult than ever to know just what you are getting when you fill up at the pump. Gasoline may be 10% ethanol (the present standard), or 15%, once new supplies reach the market. Some gasoline may contain 5%, 8%, or even 20%, the exact amount is not going to be standardized. Gasoline at the marina will likely contain no ethanol at all. Unfortunately, it may be impossible to know what percentage of ethanol is in the gas because government regulations for labeling gasoline at the pump are sketchy at this point. The bottom line to the millions of power boaters is basically this, buyer beware. If you fill up at the gas station on your way to the lake, you may not know what you are getting.

At Sierra, we are all for more efficient use of all resources, whether it's fuel, air or water. We know that there are bigger issues being addressed by this decision than whether or not you've got ethanol in your gas tank. That is why we have been continually investing in R&D to come up with products that will let boaters take advantage of the benefits of our nation's natural resources without having to worry about any potential side-effects.

We have developed ethanol-resistant hoses that easily handle E10 or E15 fuel with no problems. In fact, we are just introducing a new Silverado 4000 hose product, and new fuel bulb, that has many of the same characteristics of older rubber hoses (flexible, easy to rig, etc.) Our Sierra fuel/water separator filters are proven to remove water and debris down to the 10-

micron level from fuel before it gets to the engine where it might cause damage. And we also offer a full line of lubricants and fuel system additives, like our new Sierra eGuard Fuel Additive, that allow boaters to treat fuel before problems arise.

So be wary – and take action now, before a problem arises. If you have an older boat, go over all the fuel lines and replace any old hoses with new hoses that meet the new standards. If you have not installed a fuel/water separator filter, now is the time. If your boat is going to sit idle for more than a few days, make sure you treat the fuel with a storage additive. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. With the right products and some advance precautions, you can fill up with confidence and enjoy your time on the water without worry.