

Is GIE+EXPO Still On? And Other OPEI News

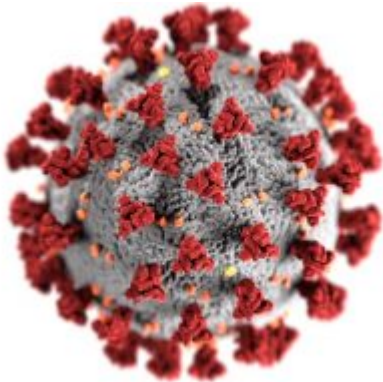
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The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) just released the association's response to COVID-19. President and CEO Kris Kiser said, "OPEI remains open for business, and we are mindful of the ongoing challenges coronavirus is posing for our members, and the need for a prudent response. OPEI staff have been instructed to work remotely. OPEI's members span the globe, including China, Japan, Europe, and here in the U.S., and we have endeavored to make our upcoming meetings as accessible as possible, providing web and phone access for all committee and task force meetings."

Kiser added, "Our international tradeshow, [GIE+EXPO](#), is currently scheduled to proceed as planned in Louisville, KY, on October 21 to 23." Links to member resources, such as: [Department of Labor guidance](#); a shareable, printable one to two pager with COVID-19 [workplace tips](#) for employees; and CDC [factsheets](#) in English, Spanish and Chinese, and more can be found on the OPEI site [here](#).

Other News: Improper Fueling Study

In other news, OPEI says consumers remain confused about the multiple fuel product offerings in the marketplace, according to says a new study of 3,000

U.S. adults, commissioned by OPEI and conducted online by The Harris Poll. The study shows lack of education, inadequate labeling, and dangerous marketing tactics around new fuel products—such as higher ethanol-blended gasoline—are likely causing consumers to misfuel. The study found that more than one in five outdoor power equipment owners are currently mis-fueling and one quarter have done so in the past. (The study has been conducted annually for seven years.)

This [fueling](#) confusion can lead to potentially costly repairs, says the OPEI's President and CEO, Kris Kiser. "The EPA has stated it's illegal to use any gasoline containing more than 10% ethanol in any small engine product, like a lawn mower, string trimmer, leaf blower, generator, or UTV. There are more fuel blends and choices on the marketplace today, and consumers don't always realize that what works in their car or truck, may damage their small engine equipment not designed, built, or warranted for it." He added that it's important for consumers to select the right fuel for their outdoor power equipment since mis-fueling can invalidate a manufacturer's warranty.

The study found that nearly two in five Americans (37%, up from 33% in 2019, 31% in 2017 and 2016, and 30% in 2015) mistakenly believe that higher ethanol blends of gasoline are safe to use for any gasoline-powered lawn equipment or other small engine products, such as boats or snowmobiles. Also:

- Roughly half of outdoor power equipment owners (51%, down from 58% in 2019) say they either don't pay attention to (25%) or are unsure of (27%) the type of fuel they use in their outdoor power equipment.
- Twenty percent of equipment owners admit they currently use fuel in their equipment with higher than recommended ethanol (E15/E30/E50/E85), up from 12% in 2019, 11% in 2018, 12% in 2017, 8% in 2016, and 7% in 2015.
- A quarter (25 percent) of equipment owners admit they have used fuel higher than E10 when fueling their outdoor power equipment in the past.
- Just over one in 10 equipment owners (11 percent, up from 6 percent in 2019), have used an E15 or higher fuel in an engine not designed for it.

Some of the problem boils down to assumptions. More than three in five Americans assume that any gas sold at the gas station is safe for all of their cars, as well as boats, mowers, chain saws, snowmobiles, generators, and other engine products. The price of gasoline also factors into consumer decision-making, as nearly two thirds of Americans say they will use the least expensive grade of gasoline whenever possible.

"Combine a consumer's desire to save money with confusing pump labeling, and add in disingenuous marketing for Octane 88, which is really 15% ethanol or E15, and it's no wonder these numbers are going up," said Kiser. "As the regulator of the fuels marketplace, the government needs to improve pump labeling and educate consumers on the fuel blends available and how they should be used."

Other key findings:

- 62% say they would purchase 88 Octane fuel if fueling outdoor power

equipment and it was available at a cheaper price than other unleaded/regular fuels.

- Only 22% know that 88 Octane fuel has more ethanol in it than 87 Octane fuel, suggesting a majority could be carelessly using 88 Octane.
- 54% believe the current voluntary warning label put out by the EPA for gas stations that sell fuels higher than E10 is inadequate to inform consumers about E15 fuel being illegal to use in outdoor power equipment, and should be larger, clearer, and mandatory.
- 71% feel ethanol-free gas should be more widely available at gas pumps.
- When it comes to [battery-powered](#) outdoor power equipment, 84% say they are likely to charge the battery following the instructions from the owner's manual. But, 78% are likely to charge the battery overnight; 63% are likely to charge the battery for more than 24 hours; and 59% are likely to leave the battery on the charger until it is needed. All of which could potentially cause damage to the battery or create a safety hazard.
- It appears that most battery-powered equipment owners recognize the importance of using a battery brand that matches their equipment when replacing batteries. 79% say it is important, while 35% say it is "very" important that the extra/replacement batteries they purchase are from the same brand.