

BIODIESEL DISCOVERY CAUSES ALARM

Recently while searching for the source of an estimated 5-10 gallons of spilled fuel in the basement of the home Washingtonville, NY, (Orange County) responders discovered a “backyard” bio-diesel production facility in a detached garage on the property. Inside they found dozens of 55-gallon drums most containing cooking oil, and two containing highly flammable ethanol as well as seven 500-gallon containers for the finished product.

Points to consider:

Consider that the secret backyard production of biodiesel is a growing trend in many parts of the country. Biodiesel is made from vegetable oil and can power diesel cars with a few modifications. Consider that biodiesel production involves toxic chemicals, including a flammable alcohol called methanol (UN1230), a heat source and the complications of transferring of flammable fluids from one container to another. Additionally be aware that firefighters responding to the fire may not know that the premises contains biodiesel and may have difficulty suppressing the fire and create additional hazards for responders because of the fuel stored there.

Reprinted from The Virtual Report, January 13, 2010.



Photos courtesy of Gary Hearn, Captain, Washingtonville Fire Department



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