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OfReg grants import permit to Refuel for new more sustainable fuel alternative E85.

Cayman Islands Utilities regulator OfReg has issued an import permit for a new alternative fuel known as 'FLEXFUEL' or 'E85' to local retailer, Refuel.

The new E85 fuel type is widely used in other countries around the world and is an automotive fuel blend of ethanol and gasoline. Through its Fuel Standards Committee, OfReg has established the Cayman Islands standard for E85 and approved a Class 1 designation that means the percentage of ethanol in the blend with gasoline must be between 70% and 83% to maximise the drivability of vehicles.

Flex fuels are largely accepted to be more sustainable than traditional gasoline as ethanol is a renewable fuel source mostly derived from corn. E85 fuel imported to Cayman means less harmful fossil fuel emissions such as CO₂ due to the much lower gasoline content in the fuel.

On the introduction of the new E85 fuel to the Cayman Islands, OfReg Deputy Chief Fuels Inspector Mr. Ken Springer said the new fuel also supports the Cayman Islands National Energy Policy (NEP), "The Fuel Standards Committee has adopted a fuel quality standard for the bulk import of E85 that provides Cayman with a high-quality alternative fuel for flex fuel vehicles that is more sustainable and produces lower greenhouse gas emissions than gasoline only fuels.

This is a requirement of the NEP and as the Utility regulator, we are required to ensure alternatives such as E85 are made available to consumers."

According to OfReg CEO, Mr. Peter Gough, new fuel types such as E85 are another example of OfReg's commitment to ensuring critical national infrastructure like the fuel supply chain is prepared for the future. He said, "Planning for Cayman's future energy requirements for vehicles as how they are powered evolves, includes fuel diversification and introducing alternative fuel types such as E85.

OfReg is committed to ensuring the highest standards and quality of fuels reach the Cayman Islands."

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FURTHER INFORMATION FOR EDITORS

What is E85? According to the US Department of Energy, E85 is a marketing term for ethanol – gasoline blends containing 51% to 83% ethanol, depending on geography and season of the areas where this fuel is marketed.



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What is ethanol? It is a renewable fuel primarily made from corn. Ethanol has a lower energy content than gasoline, which impacts vehicle fuel economy.

What type of vehicles are compatible with E85? Vehicle manufacturers have developed Flexible Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) which are capable of operating on E85 or gasoline or any blend of the two. Some manufacturers place a yellow cap on the vehicle's fuel tank as one of the means of identifying an FFV.

What is the typically octane rating of E85? The octane of E85 is much higher than gasoline with 95 to 97 anti-knock index (AKI) depending on its hydrocarbon content.

How does it appear? The fuel is clear and bright with no visible particles seen suspended in it.

How does it affect different materials? According to the US Department of energy, E85 acts like a cleaning agent and will loosen up the sludge in the storage tanks. E85 can corrode soft metals and reduces the tensile strength of some non-metallic materials. Zinc, brass, lead and aluminium have shown sensitivity to degradation with E85. Terne plated steel (lead – tin alloy coating) fuel tanks and tanks which were repaired using lead base solder are not compatible with E85. Un-plated steel, stainless steel, black iron and bronze are compatible and have shown resistance to corrosion.

How to identify E85 at your gas station? The E85 nozzle is identified by the lettering "E85" in a yellow background on the dispenser and a yellow nozzle boot.

How long can I store it for? Ethanol is extremely hygroscopic (it attracts water). High concentration of water will cause the gasoline to separate and leave an ethanol/water mixture. Therefore, it is recommended that E85 in your vehicle's tank should be replaced every 2 – 3 weeks to avoid alcohol and water related engine problems if the vehicle is not in used.

ABOUT OFREG

The Utility Regulation and Competition Office ('OfReg' or the 'Office') is the independent regulator established by section 4 of the Utility Regulation and Competition Act (as revised) (the 'URC Act') for the electricity, information, and communications technology, water, wastewater, and fuel sectors in the Cayman Islands.

OfReg provides the opportunity for consistency and collaboration in regulation across the energy, fuel, ICT, and water sectors; better utilisation of skills and resources resulting in more efficient and effective regulatory processes; encouraging competition where appropriate and feasible; championing sustainability and innovation across markets, contributing to the economic and social goals of the Cayman Islands.



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