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# Hanging Hardware Quality and Reliability Are Essential

*In keeping fueling sites operating during coronavirus crisis*

By Ed Kammerer

**Never before has the proper understanding and use of the word essential been more, well, essential.** Canada's coronavirus-related shelter-in-place and social-distancing orders have turned the country into a land of essential and non-essential functions. Among the class of services that fits solidly into the essential category is retail fueling.

The reason is obvious: medical professionals, emergency first responders, freight haulers and operators in any other industries that are essential to maintaining the health and well-being of the populace, need to perform their jobs without interruption. This means that the retail fueling stations that enable them to fuel their vehicles are a vital cog in ensuring that these people get where they need to be when they need to be there. Additionally, fueling sites that offer a convenience-store component can serve the grocery and supply needs of the general public.

Therefore, it is essential that all retail fueling and c-store facilities continue to operate flawlessly during this time of crisis.

### **Combining Quality and Reliability**

In general, to keep drivers coming back to a fueling site, retailers need to deliver on their promise of a quality experience – both emotionally and functionally – every time a nozzle is placed in the vehicle or the c-store is entered. Making people feel good about your site is the emotional side of your brand. Making sure your fueling equipment is always operating properly, hassle-free and performs as expected is the functional side of the experience.

Keep in mind that your dispensing system, and in particular your fueling nozzles,



OPW 14-Series Nozzles

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represents the most frequent handshake you have with your customers. Ensuring that you are always delivering a quality, reassuring handshake begins by having the best equipment at this critical customer touch point on the fueling island. Therefore, it is important to note that the only time a driver has a truly memorable experience with a fuel nozzle is when it fails to perform as expected; in this case, the memorable experience is a negative one. With this in mind, the goal should be to minimize any negative events by specifying high-quality hanging hardware (nozzles, breakaways, swivels and hoses) that helps ensure the a trouble-free fueling experience whenever possible.

Using equipment of the highest quality would seem to be a no-brainer for fuel retailers, but quality equipment can have a higher initial purchase price than low-quality alternatives. This often forces the retailer to choose between quality and initial cost, with the less-expensive equipment maybe making the most sense at the time, but over the long term it can turn out to be a costly mistake. That's why we recommend the high-quality option as the initial purchase; it can be more expensive up front, but over its lifetime, that initial expense will be more than made up by reduced maintenance, replacement, cleanup and downtime costs.

At a time when equipment breakdowns and bagged fuel nozzles are even less desirable, knowing which of the high-quality hanging-hardware components is the best choice is also extremely important. An aid to the retailer in this area is third-party certification. Specifically, Underwriters' Laboratories Canada (ULc) notes that: "As regulations evolve and expand the demand for additional types of fuel, manufacturers and fueling stations will need to stay up-to-date on what requirements they need to comply with and how they can adapt to meet the shifting marketplace demand."

With that in mind, ULc tests fuel-dispensing equipment for both reliable performance and serviceability, along with compatibility with the ever-growing menu of gasoline, diesel and alternative-fuel formulations that are finding their way to the forecourt.


Realizing that reliable hanging-hardware performance must go hand-in-hand with fuel dispensing compatibility, OPW Retail Fueling, Smithfield, NC, USA, has developed hanging hardware kits (also

referred to as hose kits) that feature hanging hardware that has been tested for reliability and third-party approved for use with specific fuel formulations. These kits can be configured to meet the needs of very specific fueling operation parameters, from basic 3/4-inch nozzles, swivels, breakaways and hoses to 1-inch high-speed truck-stop nozzles, swivels, breakaways and hoses, and the new dripless nozzles that have begun to enter the market.

#### Conclusion

In summary, retail fueling sites that outfit their dispensing islands with hanging hardware that is of the highest initial quality and that has also been third-party tested for performance and fuel compatibility stand the best chance of staying operational. It is this

trait that will allow the fueling site to meet the needs of the essential medical personnel, first responders and freight haulers, whose abilities to perform their jobs efficiently and effectively cannot be compromised in the least during these trying times.

So, with the world turned upside down, know that OPW and our distributors continue to work tirelessly to provide reliable products to keep everyone safe and healthy and on the go as we work through the challenges created by the coronavirus crisis. 

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