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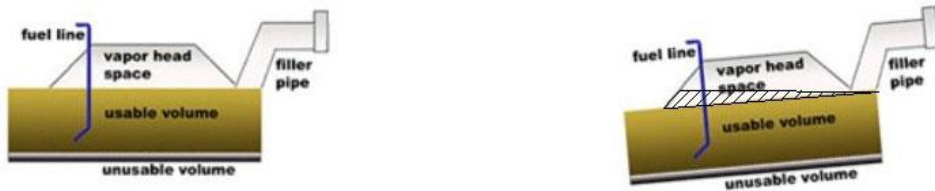


Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture

Taken from an August 2005, National Institute of Standards and Technology Quarterly Newsletter.
Original article by Juana Williams

The vehicle's fuel tank capacity rating is a reasonable approximation given variables such as differences in design practices, test procedures, and other influence factors on the fuel system. Fuel tank capacity can vary from the actual tank capacity as a result of normal variations in design characteristics, the manufacturing process, and other inherent factors such as the physics associated with components and the electronics in the fuel system and fuel level indications. Typically, the owner's manual provides a reasonable estimate of the vehicle's fuel tank capacity. The tank capacity's numerical value is reported in tenth of whole figures rounded to the nearest value and, therefore, represents an approximate volume.

There are also factors that can cause a fuel tank to appear to hold more than it's rated capacity. One of these would be position of vehicle when filling. If the lanes around the fuel pumps are not level, this could allow fuel to fill the vapor headspace portion of the tank when filling. The vapor headspace is the portion of the tank at a level above the filler pipe neck. Another factor would be filling the filler pipe of the tank. A vehicle's fuel tank capacity does not include the vapor headspace or the volume of the filler pipe.



 = UNINTENDED TANK FILL WHEN CAR IS ON SLOPE