Tetraethyl Lead Encyclopedia Article

Tetraethyl Lead

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Tetraethyl Lead

Tetraethyl **lead** is an organometallic compound with the chemical formula $(C_2H_5)_4Pb$. In 1922, automotive engineers found that the addition of a small amount of this compound to **gasoline** improves engine performance and reduces knocking. Knocking is a physical phenomenon that results when low-octane gasoline is burned in an internal **combustion** engine. Until 1975, tetraethyl lead was the most common additive used to reduce knocking in motor fuels. This additive presents an environmental hazard, however, since lead is expelled into the **environment** during operation of **automobile** engines using leaded fuels. Given the growing concern about the health effects of lead, the compound has now been banned for use in gasolines in the United States.

See Also

Air Pollution; Air Pollution Index; Emission; Gasohol