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Using mobile wallets at petrol pumps is risky as it can lead to explosion

By [Sanjeev Choudhary](#), ET Bureau | Updated: Dec 01, 2016, 12.36 AM IST

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NEW DELHI: Using Paytm or any other mobile wallet for cashless transactions at petrol pumps hold a big safety risk — a possible spark during mobile data transfer can result in explosion.

This is the reason staff at filling stations discourage visitors from using cellphones while getting their vehicles refueled. In doing so they follow a guideline from the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO), the safety regulator, that mandates no use of cellphones within 6 meters of the filling points.

There is vapour around the fuel tank while it is being filled and a cellphone spark can result in a fire, said Sanjiv Singh, director, refineries at [Indian Oil Corp](#), the nation's largest fuel retailer.

"Bikers are most at risk since the tank is very close to the mobile phone held by the customer," he said.

Some cellphones do not produce spark and therefore safer but are unaffordable for most customers, Singh said. Executives at state fuel retailers and oil ministry officials have been meditating over the issue, trying to figure out a way that helps accelerate the push towards cash-less transaction at filling stations without violating PESO guidelines.

On average, petrol pumps get nearly 85 per cent of their sales in cash from customers, according to Ajay Bansal, president of All India Petroleum Dealers Association (AIPDA).

About 60-65 per cent comes in cash from customers, about 5 per cent via credit and debit cards, while the balance is accounted for in credit sales where mainly big customers use a mix of preloaded company cards, cheques and cash to make periodic payments, Bansal said.

With demonetisation, there is a special thrust to move towards cashless transactions and mobile wallets are seen as a helping tool. Bansal said the petrol pumps are now considering building a small kiosk at the entry or exit to help customers pay using mobile wallet while still keeping a safe 6 meter distance from a filling point.

Executives say oil marketing companies such as Indian Oil Corp, [Bharat Petroleum](#) and [Hindustan petroleum](#) have already been adopting new payment techniques such as mobile wallet to make it more convenient for customers to pay.

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