

U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Alternative Fuels Data Center

Methanol

Methanol, also known as wood alcohol, can be used as an alternative fuel in flexible fuel vehicles that run on M85 (a blend of 85% methanol and 15% gasoline). However, it is not commonly used because automakers are no longer supplying methanol-powered vehicles.

Methanol can be used to make methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE), an oxygenate which is blended with gasoline to enhance octane and create cleaner burning fuel. MTBE production and use has declined because it has been found to contaminate ground water. In the future, methanol could possibly be the fuel of choice for providing the hydrogen necessary to power fuel cell vehicles.

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