

# Fastener bolt failure led to pit road fire that injured three at Richmond

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CONCORD, N.C. – A fastener bolt failed on a gas can, leading fuel to spill and ignite in a pit road fire that injured three crew members during last month's Xfinity race at Richmond International Raceway, Robin Pemberton, NASCAR senior vice president of competition, said Friday.

Pemberton, who made the comment in a meeting with reporters at Charlotte Motor Speedway about [safety upgrades officials soon will be mandating](#), said the bolt was about due for maintenance.

The incident took place during [Brendan Gaughan](#)'s pit stop. Fuel spilled and was ignited by a spark. Gaughan's gas man, Josh Wittman, was hospitalized overnight, and Gaughan's rear tire changer, Anthony O'Brien, was released from the hospital three days later. Clifford Turner, a member of [Eric McClure](#)'s crew who

helped extinguish the fire on O'Brien by jumping on him, was treated for inhaling chemical sprayed on O'Brien and released from a hospital that night.

That fire and a smaller one in [Ryan Newman](#)'s pit stall during the Sprint Cup race at Talladega Superspeedway, led NASCAR to mandate that all over-the-wall pit crew members wear fire-protective underwear, socks, head socks and gloves. All previously were recommended for over-the-wall pit crew members other than the gas man.

The mandate becomes effective June 4 except for the socks. Those will be required in August. Pemberton said that the delay is because there aren't any SFI-certified fire-protective socks at this point.

Pemberton said that a survey of teams showed that most had their crew members using all of those products.

Pemberton also said that NASCAR is requiring that fuelers must have their helmet visor down when fueling a car. Pemberton said that Wittman had a dark visor on his helmet and had it taped up during the stop in Gaughan's pit.