Central Motor Vehicles Rules amended: E100 (pure ethanol) added alongside E85 as fuel for flex-fuel vehicles

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News

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), under Section 110 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, issued notification G.S.R. 911(E) amending the Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR), 1989, on 23 Oct 2026; it was published in the Gazette on 26 Oct and took effect at once. In Rule 115, 'E85' now reads 'E85 or E100'. A new explanatory note says E85 or E100 shall be used in vehicles designed as flex-fuel vehicles by the manufacturers (OEMs). In the fuel table, petrol references now read E10 and E20, biodiesel B10 becomes B100, and the weight threshold rises from 3,000 to 3,500 kg. The draft rules had been published on 27 Apr 2026.

Key facts

Notification	G.S.R. 911(E) – issued 23 Oct 2026; Gazette 26 Oct 2026; draft G.S.R. 313(E), 27 Apr 2026
Legal basis	Motor Vehicles Act 1988, Sec 110; Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989 (Rules 115, 115E)
E100 / E85	E100 – 100% ethanol-based fuel; E85 – 85% ethanol + petrol
Use	Only in vehicles designed as flex-fuel vehicles by OEMs

E100 sale	IndianOil 'ETHANOL 100' – 15 Mar 2024; 183 outlets in 5 States (incl. Tamil Nadu); octane 100–105
Vehicles	Maruti Wagon R Flex Fuel (June 2026; for commercial use) – India's first flex-fuel hatchback

Background

- Policy: the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme began in 2003. National Policy on Biofuels 2018 (Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas); its 2022 amendment advanced the E20 target to Ethanol Supply Year 2025–26. E20 is now the nationwide standard. Next step – higher blends and flex-fuel vehicles; aims – cutting crude imports and emissions, and raising farm incomes.
- Science: ethanol (C_2H_5OH) absorbs water and corrodes rubber and some metals; it has a higher octane rating than petrol but less energy per litre. Hence flex-fuel vehicles need compatible seals, fuel lines and injectors; sensors detect the blend and adjust engine settings.
- Constitution: in the Seventh Schedule, 'mechanically propelled vehicles including the principles of taxing them' is Concurrent List Entry 35, while 'taxes on vehicles' is State List Entry 57. So the Centre frames vehicle rules while States levy road tax.
- World: Brazil has run a flex-fuel vehicle programme since 2003 – a pioneer in sugarcane ethanol; the USA leads in corn ethanol. India, Brazil, the USA and others launched the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) at the G20 New Delhi Summit in 2023.

Tamil Nadu link: CM M.K. Stalin released the 'Tamil Nadu Ethanol Blending Policy 2023' in March 2023 – aiming to meet a blending requirement of about 130 crore litres within the State and attract about ₹5,000 crore in molasses-, sugar- and grain-based distilleries (valid for 5 years). Tamil Nadu was also one of the 5 States where IndianOil launched 'ETHANOL 100' in 2024.

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