

CHAPTER 2

COMPRESSED GAS CYLINDER SAFETY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The use of compressed gas cylinders is a frequent adjunct to the Laboratory's daily operation. These cylinders contain gases that vary in chemical properties from inert and harmless to toxic and explosive. In addition, the high pressures of these gases constitute a serious hazard in the event that the cylinders are exposed to physical damage and/or high temperatures.

2.2 SCOPE

This chapter provides guidelines concerning the safe use of compressed gas cylinders in the Laboratory. Identification, inspections, transport, storage, installation, use, and disposal of gas cylinders are discussed. This chapter does not provide guidance for the protection of personnel against inhalation hazards associated with the accidental dispersion of gases (for details, refer to Section 8, "Industrial Hygiene," Chapter 7).

2.3 DEFINITIONS

Approved Testing Facility - American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, 1986 with addenda and errata through 1988.

Compressed Gas - A gas, other than in solution, that in a packaging under charged pressure and is entirely gaseous at a temperature of 20 °C (68 °F).

DOT Cylinder - Cylinder meeting U.S. Department of Transportation Regulation 173.34.

Explosimeter - Meter for detecting explosive gas mixtures.

Toxic Gas - A gas having a health rating of three or four, as defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 704, "Standard System for the Identification of the Fire Hazards of Materials."

Standard Cylinder Status Tag - A tag attached to a compressed gas cylinder that gives the status of the cylinder as follows: full, in use, or empty.

2.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.4.1 Department or Division Heads are responsible for ensuring implementation of this section.

2.4.2 Line Supervisors/Users are responsible for direct implementation of this section. Specifically, Line Supervisors shall provide training in the proper use and handling of cylinders.

2.4.3 ES&H Division is responsible for assisting in the interpretation and implementation of this section. Specifically, ES&H Division shall assist in coordinating the removal of any cylinder found to be defective which requires immediate removal from the area.

2.4.4 Materiel Control Division is responsible to (1) assure that cylinders are within specified hydrostatic test date before distribution, (2) assure that the condition of compressed gas cylinders is as specified in this chapter prior to issuance, (3) attach a standard cylinder status tag to each cylinder at the time of delivery to user, and (4) deliver cylinders properly secured.

2.5 REQUIREMENTS

2.5.1 DOT 173.34; NFPA 55; Compressed Gas Association Pamphlet P-1;

2.5.2 OSHA Regulations 29 CFR 1910; ES&HD 5008, Section 5008; and Section 8, NFPA 704

2.5.3 49 CFR, Parts 171-179; ANSI Z48.1-1954; Section 8, NFPA 704

2.6 PRACTICES/PROCEDURES

2.6.1 General

- A. Identification - Compressed gas cylinders shall be legibly marked, with either the chemical or trade name of the gas, for the purpose of identifying gas content. Cylinders shall be marked with stencil, stamp, or securely attached label. Whenever practical, the marking shall be on the shoulder of the cylinder. Markings, labels, decals, tags, or stencil marks used for the identification of contents shall not be defaced. No marks or numbers stamped into a cylinder shall be changed or obliterated.
- B. Repairs and Alterations - Cylinders, valves, or safety-relief devices shall not be repaired or altered except by an approved testing facility. Cylinders shall be repainted only with the concurrence of the ES&H Division.
- C. Connections - Compressed gas cylinders shall be equipped with a connection as required by Pamphlet CGAV-1 of the Compressed Gas Association, Inc.
- D. Inspections - Compressed gas cylinders shall be inspected by the user prior to and during use to determine that cylinders are in a safe condition for use. Inspect for corrosion, valve damage or leaks, evidence of tampering, etc. Never use a flame to detect flammable gas leaks.
- E. Periodic Testing - Most compressed gas cylinders are required to be retested periodically. All portable cylinders used for the storage and shipment of compressed gases shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with the regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation, 49 CFR, Parts 171-179. Compressed gas cylinders shall be legibly marked for the purpose of identifying cylinder contents in accordance with ANSI Z48.1-1954.

- F. Recharging - Cylinders shall not be recharged or contents mixed with other gases without prior review and concurrence of the ES&H Division.
- G. Transportation - Only cylinders meeting the requirements of the Department of Transportation Regulation 173.34 may be used for the transportation of compressed gases.

2.6.2 Cylinder Use

- A. Moving and Handling
 - 1. Caps shall be kept on at all times except when cylinders are physically connected to a regulator, manifold, or distribution apparatus.
 - 2. Cylinders shall not be lifted by the cap.
 - 3. Cylinders shall not be dropped or permitted to strike against each other or other surfaces violently.
 - 4. Cylinders shall not be lifted with a lifting magnet. Slings, ropes, or chains should not be used unless provisions have been made on the cylinder by the manufacturer for appropriate lifting attachments, such as lugs. A crane may be used only when a safe cradle or platform is provided to hold the cylinders.
 - 5. Cylinders shall be transported by suitable hand trucks, or rolled on the bottom edge.
 - 6. Before returning cylinders to the supplier, the valve shall be closed and the protective cap reattached.

B. Storing Cylinders

1. Compressed and liquefied gases in portable cylinders shall be stored in accordance with NFPA 55.
2. Cylinder storage areas shall be posted prominently with the types of gases to be stored.
3. Where gases of different types are stored at the same location, cylinders should be grouped by types of gas, and the groups arranged to take into account the types of gas contained, e.g., flammable gases shall not be stored next to oxidizing gases.
4. When oxygen and a fuel gas such as acetylene are to be stored, they shall be separated by a distance of twenty feet or by a non-combustible barrier at least five-feet high having a fire-resistance rating of one-half hour.
5. Cylinders shall not be stored near highly flammable or combustible substances.
6. Charged and empty cylinders shall be stored separately. Old stock should be stored in an accessible area so as to be removed first.
7. The gas cylinder storage area shall be dry, cool, well ventilated, and fire resistant, where practical.
8. Heated storage areas shall be arranged so that stored cylinders or other containers cannot be spot-heated or heated above 125 °F (51.7 °C).

9. Cylinders should not be stored in the open; but in such cases where required, they shall be protected against extremes of weather. In summer certain gases when stored in the open should be protected from the continuous rays of the sun (refer to the supplier for specific recommendations). If ice or snow accumulates on a cylinder, it should be thawed at room temperature or with water at a temperature not exceeding 51 °C (125 °F).
10. Cylinders shall be protected from any object that will produce a cut or other abrasion in the surface of the metal. Do not store near elevators or gangways, or in locations where heavy moving objects may strike or fall on them.
11. Cylinders shall not be exposed to continuous dampness and shall not be stored near salt or other corrosive chemicals or gases. Corrosion may damage the cylinders and may cause the valve-protective caps to stick.

C. Installation

1. Compressed gas cylinders should be handled only by personnel who have attended the Office of Certification and Training (OCT) Compressed Gas and Cryogenics Safety Course.
2. The user responsible for the cylinder and for its installation shall check the identity of the gas before use. The cylinder shall be returned to the supplier, unused, if the cylinder content is not identified, if hydrostatic test date is past due, or if the cylinder is in any way damaged.
3. Cylinders shall be secured properly (see paragraph E of this section).

4. Valve-protective caps shall be kept in place until the cylinder is connected to a regulator or manifold.
5. Suitable pressure regulating devices must be used in all cases where gas is admitted to systems designed for pressure less than cylinder pressure. Only regulators approved by the manufacturer for the gas being used and in good condition shall be installed.

D. Withdrawing Cylinder Content

1. Cylinder valves should be opened slowly. Never direct high-pressure gas streams toward the body as embolisms can result from gas forced under the skin or entering a wounded area.
2. Do not use wrenches or tools to open a cylinder valve except those provided or approved by the gas manufacturer. Never hammer the valve wheel in attempting to close the valve.
3. Do not attempt to open valves or caps that are hard to open or frozen because of corrosion. Return these cylinders to the Materiel Control Division or to the vendor.
4. Never use compressed gas, unless protected by suitable traps or check valves, where the cylinder or its contents is apt to be contaminated by the feedback of process material.
5. Connections to piping, regulators, and other equipment always should be kept tight to prevent leakage. Where hoses or metal coils are used, they should be maintained in good condition. Use Leak-tek or a similar material to check for leaks. A flame shall not be used for leak detection.

6. Before a cylinder is removed from service, determine that the cylinder valve is closed securely and all pressure is released from the connected system.

E. Securing Cylinders

1. Cylinders shall be secured to fixed structures or to movable carts in the case of gas, welding, or cutting apparatus.
2. Cylinders shall be secured by the body, at two-thirds the height of the cylinder, and not by the valve.
3. Cylinders shall be secured by one of the following methods, depending on size and use:
 - a. Safety chain provided with a positive locking device such as a nylon strap with a locking buckle or self-locking hook to prevent accidental release of cylinder.
 - b. Nylon strap and buckle assembly with attachment fixture. This item is specially designed to restrain portable gas cylinders.
 - c. A cradle with indentations designed to accommodate gas cylinders in a horizontal position.
 - d. An upright storage box with individual cells designed to hold several cylinders at one time.

F. Tagging Procedure

1. At the time of delivery a Standard Cylinder Status Tag has been placed on all cylinders by the Materiel Control Division. Untagged gas cylinders should be returned to Materiel Control Division.
2. When the cylinder is placed in use, the bottom of the tag with the word "Full" shall be removed.
3. When the cylinder is no longer required, the "IN USE" section of the tag shall be removed and Materiel Control Division (x3570) shall be called for pick-up. All cylinders shall be treated as though residual gas remains.

G. Removal

When cylinders are empty or are no longer needed, remove from the installation and request pick-up by Materiel Control Division.

H. Cylinder Defects and Disposal

1. If a cylinder leak cannot be stopped by tightening a valve gland or packing nut, close the valve; and if possible, detach the cylinder from the installation. Contact Materiel Control to arrange for removal from the building.
2. When cylinders, valves, contents, etc., are in such a condition that the only safe or practical solution is disposal, request removal through Materiel Control. If an unsafe condition exists, the pick-up request will be expedited by the ES&H Division.

2.7 SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Gases of special concern are discussed in Appendix 9.2-A.

2.8 REFERENCES

DOT Regulation 49 CFR 178.

OSHA Regulation 29 CFR 1910.

CGA Pamphlet P-1, "Safe Handling of Compressed Gases."

NFPA 55, "Standard for the Storage, Use, and Handling of Compressed and Liquefied Gases in Portable Container."

NFPA 704, "Standard System for the Identification of the Fire Hazards of Materials."

DOT Regulation 49 CFR, Parts 171-179.

ANSI Z48.1-1954.