



SafetyAlert

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Compressed Gas Safety

Compressed gas cylinders come in an assortment of colors. They are used by many industries to store and dispense everything from oxygen to helium for balloons. Cylinders are typically supplied with a label to identify contents. The vessel color is not always a reliable indicator of contents.



Storage of Compressed Gas Tanks

Store cylinders in an area where they will not be knocked over or damaged by passing objects:

- ☐ Inside buildings: Store fuel gas cylinders 20 feet from combustible material such as oil.
- ☐ Store oxygen cylinders separate from fuel gas cylinders, by 20 feet, or by a 5-foot high wall with a half-hour fire resistance rating.

General Cylinder Safety Valve Checklist

The following checklist will help you and your employees stay safe when handling compressed gas cylinders:

- ☐ Cylinders should be legibly marked on their shoulders with the chemical or trade name of the gas.
- ☐ Keep oxygen and acetylene cylinders away from radiators and heat sources.
- ☐ Always secure the cap on unused cylinders.
- ☐ Cylinders should be secured to a suitable cylinder hand truck, chained to a wall or column, or secured with another steadying device.
- ☐ Remove unused cylinders from hot work areas where cutting or welding is taking place, or use a fire resistant shield.
- ☐ Do not use cylinders as rollers.
- ☐ Hoist secured cylinders only.
- ☐ Employees should be prohibited from repairing a cylinder.
- ☐ Provide flash-back protection that will prevent flame from passing into the fuel gas system.
- ☐ Always close valves on empty cylinders.
- ☐ Keep cylinders, couplings and valves free from oily and greasy substances.
- ☐ Do not use valve protection caps for lifting.
- ☐ Remove regulators and install valve protection caps prior to moving cylinders.
- ☐ Make sure cylinders, without fixed hand wheels, have keys, handles or wrenches on the valve stem while the cylinder is in service.
- ☐ Do not use a hammer and wrench to open cylinder valves. If valves cannot be opened by hand, notify the supplier.
- ☐ Fuel gas cylinders should be placed with the valve end up whenever they are in use.
- ☐ Employees should open valves while standing to one side of the outlet.
- ☐ Before connecting a regulator to a cylinder valve, employees should open the valve slightly, and close it immediately.
- ☐ Before removing a regulator, close the cylinder valve and release the gas from the regulator.
- ☐ Use only a suitable regulator to reduce the pressure for a torch or other device equipped with a shutoff.
- ☐ Always open cylinder valves slowly. Do not open acetylene cylinder valves more than 1-1/2 turns of the cylinder, and preferably no more than 3/4 of a turn.



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