Don’t Let the Pressure of Compressed Gas Get to You



What’s at Stake?

The hazards associated with compressed gas include oxygen displacement, fires, explosions, toxic effects from certain gases, reactivity and projectile concerns.

What’s the Danger?

An employee was killed when a compressed gas cylinder turned into a projectile because its valve was knocked off. Another worker suffocated after entering a space filled with nitrogen from a leaking cylinder. A massive explosion and fire at an industrial plant sent huge fireballs and gas cylinders flying hundreds of feet into the sky. These are all real-life examples of what can happen when compressed gas is not used, handled or stored correctly.

How to Protect Yourself

Read and Follow Labels and Safety Data Sheets

- Compressed gas cylinders must be properly labeled. Empty cylinders must also be marked as such. If you see a cylinder improperly marked, fix it or report it.
- Read the safety data sheet carefully for information about handling, storage and use and emergency procedures.

Know and Use Safe Work Practices for Handling and Use

- Wear required PPE.
- Use regulators that are compatible with the gas and regulators and gauges rated for the pressure in the system.
- Replace cap when not in use. This protects the valve to prevent leaks and other hazards.
- Never roll a cylinder to move it. Instead, use the appropriate cart, cradle or platform.
- Never attempt to refill a cylinder and never mix gases in a cylinder.
- Tag defective cylinders. Notify your supervisor of any problems, including difficult-to-open valves, so they can be addressed by the supplier. Do not try to fix it yourself.
- If a gas cylinder begins to leak, evacuate the area and call for emergency assistance.

Follow Safe Storage Procedures

- Select a dry, secure location well vented to the outdoors.
- Keep cylinders away from heat and any source of ignition.
- Keep cylinders upright and secured so they cannot fall or be knocked over.
- Store fuel gases and other flammable or combustible gases away from oxygen cylinders.

Final Word

Remain calm when working with gases under pressure. Follow safe use, handling and storage procedures.