

# HANDLING EXTERNALLY-SOILED MEDICAL CYLINDERS

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## **ANZIGA**

ANZIGA is the peak industry group for the manufacture and distribution of gases in Australia and New Zealand. As a leading industry association, ANZIGA promotes the highest standards of safety, quality and reliability.

### **ANZIGA aims to:**

- consult with government authorities and organisations that make policy or prepare regulations and standards which govern the production, transportation, storage, handling and use of gases.
- collaborate with other industry and trade organisations on safety and technical matters, including public programs that relate to the gases industry.
- produce information that promotes the safe storage, handling and use of gases.

The members of ANZIGA produce and distribute gases for the health and medical, manufacturing, food, scientific and hospitality industries.

### **Notice of Safety Advice**

In general a notice of Safety Advice is intended to provide information and relevant recommendations on a safety concern relating to the production, transportation, storage, handling and use of gases.

## Introduction

This position statement details the expected process for handling medical cylinders which have become externally soiled with biohazardous substances, including potential non-visible contamination.

## Position

In accordance with **AS/NZS 3816 Management of clinical and related wastes**, “*any establishment either generating or handling clinical and related waste shall be responsible for ensuring the safe disposal of such wastes.*”

In the instance of suspected external contamination of a medical gas cylinder, in most cases it is not feasible to dispose the cylinder, being a reusable container and the property of the gas company. It should therefore be appropriately cleaned before return to the supplier.

The healthcare organisation or individual shall be responsible for ensuring cylinders are returned with biohazard risk minimised, through appropriate cleaning where needed.

ANZIGA member company staff and contractors are not expected to handle cylinders where there is a perceived biohazard risk, and will be supported in their request to have the issue rectified before handling.

## Recommended Cleaning Method

It is important that the following cleaning method is followed in all instances. This is because some cleaning materials, such as ammonia or chlorine based bleach, have the potential to compromise the integrity of the cylinder or valve, and hence safe operation of the medical cylinder.

**Cylinders must be emptied in a safe manner before cleaning in order to avoid potential ignition due to alcohol and oxygen reactions. Ensure valves are closed prior to cleaning.**

**Initial cleaning** should be performed with warm water up to 50 degC to clean the entire container including valve, guard and related components. Note: cleaning temperatures must be kept below 50 degC; valve inlet and outlets must be covered prior to cleaning. Discard wipes in an appropriate biohazard waste container.

**Final cleaning** should ideally use isopropyl alcohol (IPA) wipes to fully wipe the container/valve with special focus to remove any visible soiling. Discard wipes in an appropriate biohazard waste container.

Do not use chlorine based cleaners as this may react with valves and components.

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including gloves and eye protection should be worn throughout the cleaning process.

If the above cleaning is carried out and contamination is still evident, please contact the cylinder supplier to determine appropriate further handling.

## Reference

### AS/NZS 3816:1998 - Management of clinical and related wastes

#### Australia and New Zealand Industrial Gas Association (ANZIGA)

ACN 003 067 178  
Level 11, 10 Queen Street, Melbourne, Victoria.  
PO Box 422, Flinders Lane, Victoria, 8009.  
Telephone: +61 3 9611 5412  
Email: [office@ANZIGA.org](mailto:office@ANZIGA.org)

#### Member Companies:

##### Air Liquide Australia Limited

ABN 57 004 385 782  
380 St. Kilda Road  
Melbourne VIC 3004 Australia  
Adelaide: (08) 8209 3600  
Brisbane: (07) 3246 6363  
Darwin: (08) 8947 1184  
Launceston: (03) 6334 9666  
Melbourne: (03) 9290 1100  
Perth: (08) 9494 96004  
Sydney: (02) 9892 9777

##### Air Liquide Healthcare

(02) 9364 7474  
Emergency Number:  
1800 812 588

##### Air Liquide New Zealand Limited

19 Maurice Road  
Penrose Auckland,  
New Zealand  
Telephone: 09 622 3888  
Facsimile: 09 622 3881

##### BOC Limited

ABN 95 000 029 729  
Riverside Corporate Park  
10 Julius Ave  
North Ryde NSW 2113 Australia  
Telephone: 131 262  
Facsimile: 132 427  
Emergency Number:  
1800 653 572

##### BOC Limited (New Zealand)

988 Great South Road  
Penrose Auckland,  
New Zealand  
Telephone: 0800 111 333  
Facsimile: 0800 229 923  
Emergency Services  
Telephone: 11

##### Coregas Pty Ltd

ABN 32 001 255 312  
66 Loftus Road  
Yennora NSW 2161 Australia  
Telephone:  
1800 807 203  
Emergency Number  
1300 657 070

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