



Inodaya Hospitals - Kakinada

Documentation code:

INH/FMS.Doc.No:16

Policy on safe handling of medical gases

Prepared date:11/11/2025

Reference: FMS.6.a. NABH Standards – 6th Edition

Issue Date:11/11/2025

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1. POLICY

To ensure safe, handling of Medical Gases throughout Hospital complying with legal requirements

2. PURPOSE

To prevent any untoward incident due to mishandling of Medical gases Cylinders to be stored inside covered accommodation in horizontal position on racks.

The valve of every cylinder should be tightly closed immediately after use and should be kept in a closed condition when the cylinder is exhausted and returned to the depot / supplier.

3. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all user departments of the medical gases within the hospital premises

4. ABBREVIATION

5. RESPONSIBILITY

Maintenance department, End User

6. PROCESS

6.1 Description of Process

- Care must be taken when handling or transporting cylinders to prevent their being dropped since they are liable to break and explode with violent effects.
- If large stocks of cylinders are being handled suitable trolleys should be provided for transporting and handling them.
- The name or chemical symbol of the gas should be stamped, stenciled or painted on or near the shoulder of the cylinder.
- No person is allowed to smoke/use combustible material/fire/inflamed material within 100 mt from where the gas cylinders are placed.

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- Fire extinguishers will be made available within the complex for any fire hazards
- Cylinder must not be kept in warm places where temperature is high such as in the neighborhood of furnaces, boilers etc. This may cause an undesirable rise of pressure owing to expansion of the gas. The floor of the oxygen cylinder godown and the unloading and loading platform should not be brick lined or cemented. Ordinary earth or sand or ashes are best to avoid damage to cylinders.
- The cylinder should be painted correctly according to the colour code for their identification e.g. oxygen – black body and white top, carbon dioxide – grey and nitrous oxide – blue

6.2 Activity / Responsibility

SN.	STEPS	RESPONSIBILITY
1	All medical gases cylinders, filled or empty are handled only by technically qualified persons from the Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care. The Medical gases come in authorized colour coded cylinders with safety valves and pin index system.	Maintenance Technician
2	Various type of cylinders like A type, B type and D type are received from the vendor at a schedule time nominated by the hospitals.	Maintenance Technician
3	The process by which the cylinders are received and empty cylinder returned is documented and signed by the authorized representative of the hospitals.	Maintenance Technician
SN.	STEPS	RESPONSIBILITY
4	There is separate enclosure for empty and filled cylinders. The pressure of the oxygen cylinders regarding volume of gas in any	Maintenance Technician

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	particular cylinder is checked and recorded.	
5	The cylinders are attached to the automatic change over panel. The details regarding its installation, maintenance and operations is with the work instructions available in the department	Maintenance Technician
6	The empty cylinders are returned to the vendor and recorded. This procedure is continued throughout the month and at the end, a detailed summary is submitted in administration office.	Maintenance Technician
7	The wards and department indent the demands, which are met, and the same is recorded in appropriate registers.	Maintenance Technician / End Users
8	The cylinders in the manifold automatic system have the day and date recorded on the cylinders in chalk and this helps to identify cylinders, which are getting empty.	Maintenance Technician
9	Cylinders should never be stored in places where greases or oils are stored. These are spontaneously combustible in the presence of oxygen. Grease or oil should not be used on cylinder valves or pipe connections.	Maintenance Technician
10	The valve of every cylinder should be tightly closed immediately after use and should be kept in a closed condition when the cylinder is exhausted and returned to the depot / supplier.	User department

7. **DISTRIBUTION:** Maintenance department & across the hospital

8. **REFERENCE:** Standard guidelines with reference to handling medical gases

9. RECORDS

Medical Gases consumption records and registers

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:

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First and foremost measure is the usage of Personnel Protective Equipment. Every technician or attendant working in the manifold area must wear all the protective equipment. Personal Protective Equipment which include glasses, gloves, helmets, shoes, ear muffs, body suits etc must be worn to avoid serious injuries that may be caused due to various electrical and mechanical workplace hazards



- Glasses must be worn to ensure no damage is caused to the eye in cases like dealing with gas cylinder valves..
- In areas where there are extreme noise levels, ear muffs should be worn.

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- Helmet and shoes must be worn all the time to avoid any physical accidents during work.

The PPE should be

- Properly assessed to ensure they fit properly and serve the purpose.
- Stored and maintained properly
- Provided with instructions as to how to use properly
- Used correctly by the employees

COMPRESSED MEDICAL GAS CYLINDERS

Compressed cylinders must be handled carefully and gases like Oxygen although potentially life-saving, if managed inappropriately can cause serious harm. Standardized cylinders must be taken from a single supplier and stored in safe and dry places. All cylinders must be labeled properly and checked thoroughly before usage.

STORAGE:

- Different gas cylinders like nitrous oxide and oxygen must be stored separately and names should be labeled on the cylinders.
- Oxygen cylinders must be stored separately at least 3 meters away from fuel gas cylinders.
- Full cylinders must be stored separately from empty cylinders.
- It is recommended to store cylinders vertically.
- Full or compressed gas cylinders should be stored in well ventilated area, in the open with some weather protection.
- Empty cylinders must be segregated from full cylinders.
- Do not store in confined places.

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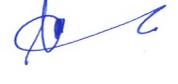
- Keep cylinders away from artificial heat sources or from flammable materials.

PRECAUTIONS:

- Cylinders must be handled only by authorized personnel.
- Storage areas should prevent unauthorized entry.
- Efforts should be made to keep the cylinders well below maximum ambient air temperature and should always be placed in the shade.
- Never lubricate cylinder valves and fittings.
- Cylinders must be kept away from flammable materials.

HANDLING:

1. The handling personnel must wear all the protective equipment like shoes, glasses and helmet before handling the cylinder.
2. The cylinder should be thoroughly checked before usage. Valve should be closed before attaching it to the regulators.
3. Regulators should be set to ZERO and then attached to the cylinder outlet valve.
4. No additional tubing should be placed between the outlet valve and the regulator.
5. Care should be taken while opening the cylinder valves.
6. Slowly open the cylinder valve in the anti-clock wise direction

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Open



Close

7. Pressures should be checked and then the cylinder can be transported.

8. Cylinders should never be rolled and should always be placed in a trolley and transported



Cylinder trolley

10. Once the full cylinder is replaced, the empty cylinder should be brought and stored separately in the empty cylinder base.

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GENERAL SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

1. No handling of cylinders without protective equipment.
2. Daily check of cylinders should be done to prevent any hazards.
3. Cylinders must be thoroughly checked before receiving them from the supplier and before replacing it in the emergency units.
4. Label the cylinders to indicate if full or empty.
5. Outlet valves should be kept clean and contamination free

The maintenance of compressed air and vacuum installations are under the preview of maintenance department and records are maintained in the engineering department.

The daily inspection is carried out and logged by the respective plant operators.

All medical gas carrying pipe line and vacuum line terminals are cleaned once in a week in OT, once in 6 months in all critical areas and once in a year in all patient care areas.

Following type of medical gases are stored, handled and supplied to various users with in the hospital by engineering department.

1, Medical oxygen 2, CO₂ 3, N₂O

Identification

1. All compressed gases received must be marked by label or tag with the name of its contents. The primary identifier of cylinder contents is the label. Color should not be used to identify contents. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be obtained and maintained by Hospital users for all compressed gases.
2. Empty cylinders must be stored apart from full cylinders while waiting to be removed at designated, marked area.

Functional Responsibility

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1. Compressed gas cylinders should be handled only by experienced and properly instructed personnel.
2. The user responsible for the cylinder and for its installation should check the identity of the gas before use. If the cylinder content is not identified, if hydrostatic test date is past due, or if the cylinder is in any way damaged, the cylinder should be returned to the supplier.

Procurement & Distribution

The medical gases compressed in cylinders are procured through centralized purchase department from authorized medical gas companies and delivered to the site according to ISI specification. The same will be distributed by Gas supply system personnel to appropriate ward as well as supplied through piped medical gas. The monitoring is effectively managed by pressure gauges, safety caps and roof top trap systems.

General Handling Procedures

1. Cylinders must be securely fastened to prevent them from falling or being knocked over. Suitable racks, straps, chains, stands or other devices are required to support cylinders.
2. Cylinder valves are to be protected with the standard cap when not in use (empty or full). Regulators are to be protected with covers where there is likelihood of damage.
3. Cylinders should not be exposed to excessive dampness, or to corrosive chemicals or fumes.
4. Cylinders are not to be exposed to temperature extremes nor stored in the vicinity of combustibles.
5. No repair or alterations are to be made to cylinders or accessories.

Specific Handling Procedures

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1. Before using a cylinder, slowly "check" the valve to clear dust or dirt, being sure the opening is not pointed toward anyone. Suitable precautions should be taken when toxic or flammable gases are involved. Do not stand in front of the regulator gauge glass when opening the valve.
2. Never use a cylinder without a regulator. Always use the correct pressure regulator.
3. After attaching the regulator, and before the cylinder is opened, check the adjusting screw of the regulator to see that it is released. Never permit the gas to enter the regulator suddenly.
4. Never try to stop a leak between a cylinder and regulator by tightening the union nut unless the valve has been closed first.
5. Never strike an electric arc on a cylinder.
6. Never use a damaged cylinder.
7. Never force a cap or regulator.

Transporting Cylinders

1. For cylinders that are threaded to accept protective valve caps, the valve caps shall be secured in place before transporting.
2. Avoid dropping and striking cylinders together. The cylinder should not be lifted by the cap.
3. Use a cradle for hoisting, never a lifting magnet or sling.
4. Use a suitable hand truck with the cylinder firmly secured. Avoid dragging, sliding or rolling cylinders.
5. Cylinders must be secured in a positive fashion with straps or chains while being transported to and when in, motor vehicles.

Storage

1. Cylinder storage areas should be prominently posted with the names of the gases to be stored. No Smoking sign should be displayed
2. When gases of different types are to be stored at the same location, cylinders should be grouped by type of gas and the groups arranged taking into account the type of gas contained (e.g., flammable gases may not be stored next to oxidizing gases).

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3. Storage rooms should be dry, cool, and well ventilated. Cylinders should not be stored at temperatures above 51 degrees C. (125 degrees F.) or near radiators or other sources of heat. Cylinders shall not be stored near highly flammable or combustible substances.
4. Cylinders stored in the open must be protected against weather extremes.
5. 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 in locations where heavy moving objects may strike or fall on them.
6. For cylinders that are threaded to accept protective valve caps, the valve caps shall be secured in place when stored.
7. Do not store gas cylinders with pressure on the regulator.

Procedures for Placement and Use of Oxygen Cylinders Outside Designated Storage Rooms

1. Storage of oxygen with a total volume compressed equal to or less than 300 cubic feet (cu ft) shall comply with the requirements of this section. Any quantities greater than 300 cu.ft require specific storage enclosures and procedures, as outlined in previous section.
2. Cylinder capacities are of various types which includes A, B and D
3. Patient care areas are limited to storing up to 12 oxygen cylinders.
4. When small-sized (B or D) cylinders are in use, they shall be attached to a cylinder stand or to a therapy apparatus of sufficient size to render the entire assembly stable.
5. An individual cylinder placed in patient room for immediate use by a patient shall not be required to be stored in an enclosure.
6. Cylinders shall not be chained to portable or movable apparatus.
7. Cylinders shall be protected from abnormal mechanical shock, which is liable to damage the cylinder, or valve.
8. Cylinders shall not be stored near elevators, or in pathways.
9. Cylinders shall be protected from tampering by unauthorized persons.
10. Free standing cylinders shall be properly chained or supported in a proper cylinder stand or cart.

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Emergencies and Special Procedures

1. In the event of a leak or suspected leak of a *toxic or flammable* gas, evacuate the building or area. Activate the fire alarm by pulling the nearest fire alarm box. Immediately notify concerned authorities what is leaking and where.
2. Use soapy water to detect leaks. Connections employing flammable or toxic gases are to be leak tested.
3. Oil, grease or other flammable material is not to be permitted to come in contact with the valves, regulators, gauges or any fittings of an *oxygen* cylinder. Oil and grease in the presence of oxygen under pressure may ignite violently. Do not handle cylinders with oily hands or gloves. Never use oxygen as a substitute for compressed air.
4. "No Smoking" signs should be placed near *flammable* gas cylinders. Fire-suppression equipment using carbon dioxide or dry chemicals should be available. Spark-proof tools should be used when working with flammable gas cylinders.
5. Wear chemical splash goggles when handling compressed gases, which are irritants, corrosive or toxic.
6. All gas installation or alteration will be carried out as per the standards.

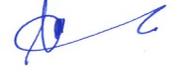
Alternate Sources

Alternate sources for medical gases, vacuum and compressed air are provided for, in case of failure.

In case of air compressor and vacuum pump, it is the stand by air compressor and vacuum pump unit. For medical gases it could be stand by gas manifold/ bulk cylinders.

The organization regularly tests the alternate sources.

6.11. There is an operational, inspection, testing and maintenance plan for piped medical gas, compressed air and vacuum installation.

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MEDICAL GAS PIPELINES

Gas pipelines are designed to provide a safe and effective method of delivering the required medical gases from source of supply through a pipeline system to the patient via a terminal unit. Each gas is supplied through a separate system.

Each system is made gas specific to ensure there is no cross connection between any system.

Periodic tests should be performed to check the pipelines to prevent any leakage or cross-section with other gas pipelines.

MOISTURE & LEAKS:

- Valves and pipe connections must be cleanly sealed to prevent moisture depositions inside the pipelines.
- Periodic test must be done to check on the amount of moisture levels in the supplied gases.
- Any leaks should be attended immediately as it may cause fall in pressure and any such leaks may also lead to fire accidents and the gases are inflammable. Hence such leaks should be sealed immediately.

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- Personnel handling the pipeline units should ensure proper pressures are maintained. Timely monitoring must be done to ensure pressures are maintained at standards.
- Gas specific connections throughout the pipeline system, including terminal units, connectors must be subjected to strict testing.

FIRE SAFETY:

Smoke or heat detector heads should be installed in the plant rooms, medical gases manifold rooms and medical gas cylinder stores. Upon detection of SMOKE or FIRE, the RACE plan should be followed.

Rescue/Remove- remove the trapped people from fire room.

Alert/ Activate- activate the nearest fire alarm and call out for CODE RED by dialing “9”.

Confine-confine the smoke by closing all doors

Extinguish-Using the fire extinguisher extinguish the fires.

FIRE PROTOCOLS:

- Do not use elevators to evacuate and always use the stairs.
- Evacuate from the fire place immediately
- Inform the Fire response team immediately.
- Call “9” for CODE RED
- Assess and Help the fire personnel if needed.
- Fire extinguishers should be used accordingly.
- Water should not be used to put off all electric fires as it may cause more damage.

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ELECTRICAL SAFETY:

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Electric devices must be properly grounded
- Only trained electricians must access the panel boards.
- Wiring should be checked regularly and any open wires should be immediately sealed.
- Electrical wiring should be marked.
- All danger areas must be marked with a DANGER board.
- Unauthorized personnel should be given access



- Regular checks and periodic maintenance must be done to avoid sudden shut down of systems.
- Check cords or devices for frayed or defective wires.
- Avoid extension cords.
- Follow manual instructions
- Ensure there is proper and regular and timely maintenance
- All panel boards must be closed and danger signs must put up to warn people

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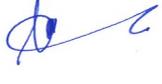


PRECAUTIONS:

- Only relevant people must have access.
- In event of fire power should be shut down to prevent any further damage or short circuiting.
- Water should never be used to shut down fire. Sand buckets should be placed to stop small fires.
- Power should be shut down in case of repair and an alternative source should be provided to the building.
- Sign boards should be placed in case of repairs to warn others.

IN CASE OF ELECTRIC SHOCKS:

- The power should be immediately shut to avoid the individual from getting more shock.
- The individual should not be touched until he has no contact with the shock causing wire or board.
- The person should not be moved and EMR

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- The shock causing wire or panel board should be checked by the concerned personnel for immediate rectification and to avoid further damage to others.
- Precautions should be taken to avoid such incidents in future by thorough checking, periodic maintenance and using protecting equipment

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