

Profit Through Quality - Good Gas, Good Business



BRITISH
BEER & PUB
ASSOCIATION



A BCGA user-guide produced in conjunction with the BBPA and the BFBi

What's the problem?

Licensees are under immense cost pressures, with competition from other leisure activities and increasing consumption of alcohol in the home. Increasingly, outlets are being targeted by seemingly attractive offers from non-reputable suppliers of dispense gas. However, do not be tempted as the consequences of this are:

- One cylinder of bad dispense gas will ruin up to 10 kegs of beer.
- You will lose customers through poor beer quality.
- Your supplier will refuse compensation claims.
- You will be at risk of prosecution for being in breach of several laws.
 - Health and Safety at Work Act
 - Food Regulations
 - Carriage of Dangerous Goods (CDG) Regulations

And last but not least - you may kill someone!

Good dispense gas

Good dispense gas will be supplied in a cylinder that is in test and in good condition, with food grade gas guaranteed, correctly labelled and safe.

Good dispense gas is essential for serving the product in the way that the drinks supplier intended.

Bad dispense gas

Bad dispense gas may be supplied by rogue traders often in stolen cylinders, in poor condition, without product identification labels, often filled with poor quality and/or contaminated gas – sometimes it might even be just compressed air! Poor quality dispense gas reflects directly on your drinks quality and service, tarnishing your reputation and losing customers.

Which would you choose?



Such cylinders have exploded in cellars, causing immense damage and injury. Short of explosion, licensees should realise that even a slow leakage of a non-breathable gas within the confined space of a cellar could lead to a very hazardous atmosphere. Carbon Dioxide and Nitrogen have no odour and people have died in such atmospheres.

How can I spot bad dispense gas?

Review your current dispense gas supplier against the checklist on the back page.

Ask them if they are registered with the relevant local authority as a food premise. See the DEFRA website (www.defra.gov.uk) for guidance.

Types of dispense gases

Always check the label before connecting any cylinder to your drinks system.

Carbon Dioxide

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) is sold as a liquid by weight. The pressure in the cylinder does not indicate the quantity left and will vary with temperature.

Never connect a liquid withdrawal CO₂ cylinder to standard drinks dispense equipment. This type of cylinder is designed for industrial liquid CO₂ applications, will destroy your dispense equipment and will be a very high safety risk for users. Liquid withdrawal CO₂ cylinders can be identified by a vertical stripe down its side or via an orange ring attached under the cylinder valve with the letters "DP" embossed into it.

Remember - always check the label before connecting any cylinder to your system

Mixed Gas

Mixed gas cylinders contain a mixture of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and Nitrogen (N₂) sold as a gas. They are filled to a very high pressure – typically up to 220 Bar, which is around 100 times greater than the pressure in a car tyre – and in this case the pressure in the cylinder does indicate the quantity remaining.

Generally there are three mixed gas types used in the UK market, depending upon the type of beer being dispensed. Your beer supplier will tell you which to use for your particular products.

- 30/70 – containing 30% CO₂ and 70% N₂.
- 50/50 – containing 50% CO₂ and 50% N₂.
- 60/40 – containing 60% CO₂ and 40% N₂.

Spotting a good dispense gas cylinder

Product Label

By law, all dispense gas cylinders must clearly display a label or other printed information covering the following items:

- Product identity.
- Emergency telephone number.
- Risk and safety phrases.
- Supplier's name.
- Hazard warning diamond.

This is usually found on the valve guard or the cylinder shoulder. An example of a mixed gas label is given below:



Can you see this information on your gas cylinder? It may be displayed on the cylinder shoulder or the valve guard.



Food Traceability Label

By law, all cylinders supplied for drinks dispense must have a product traceability label on the cylinder, valve or valve guard. Usually, this will be a small label added to the cylinder with a series of numbers and letters (or a barcode) that means that the supplier can trace the cylinder and its contents in event of any quality issue. These labels are changed every time the cylinder is refilled.

You must not use a dispense gas cylinder if it does not have product and traceability labels.

Cylinder Test Date Rings

By law, all dispense gas cylinders have to be regularly inspected and tested to ensure they continue to be totally safe for the high pressures contained inside them. These tests have to be done by a government-appointed inspection body every ten years.

To help identify tested cylinders there will be a plastic ring fitted between the valve and the cylinder that has a particular colour and shape (see below for example) that shows when the next date for inspection and test is due. This test has to be done before the cylinder is refilled again, so cylinders can be used but not refilled if the test date has passed.



Rogue suppliers do not test cylinders and put lives at risk.

It is against the law for any supplier to fill a cylinder that is outside its inspection and re-test date. The current colour coding chart for test date rings is shown overleaf

Test Rings - these indicate the year that your cylinder must be retested by law

					
2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
					
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
					
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024

The test ring shapes and colours follow an 18 year rotation as shown above, which will help guide customers on when testing is next due.

Dispense gas checklist

Please use the checklist below to identify cylinders that are safe to use. You should be able to answer "YES" to all of these questions. An answer of "NO" may indicate that the cylinder may be unsafe to use and should not be accepted.

- Are the cylinder contents clearly identified on the cylinder label?
- Is the product traceability label visible?
- Is there a current coloured plastic test date ring between the valve and the cylinder?
- Have you been supplied with separate product safety data sheets?
- Is the cylinder valve sealed when delivered?
- Does the cylinder look in good condition?

i.e. No excessive rust, dents, gouges, bulges, or defacing of any kind

Further advice

Bad dispense gas will cost you money and can put your business at risk. If you see or have been offered bad dispense gas then you should contact the BFBi Drinks Gas Hotline on +44 (0)1902 795743. Further information is available from the three industry bodies that have cooperated to produce this leaflet, see below for website details.



British Compressed Gases Association

www.BCGA.co.uk



Brewing, Food & Beverage Industry Suppliers Association

www.bfbi.org.uk



British Beer & Pub Association

www.beerandpub.com