

Compressed Gases

Hazards and precautions you need to know

Compressed gases are often used in the workplace. Common examples include acetylene, ammonia, carbon dioxide, chlorine, fluorine, hydrogen, and oxygen. Compressed gases like these serve many useful purposes, but cylinders containing compressed gases can be extremely dangerous. Used improperly, they can become deadly. You need to recognize the hazards and understand the precautions to take when working with or around compressed gases.

Hazards

- The gas contained in a cylinder may be flammable, reactive, toxic, corrosive, or a combination of these.
- If ignited, the gas could catch fire, or the tank could explode.
- Damage or sudden release of the safety valve can propel a cylinder with great force, turning it into a flying missile.

Precautions

- Place cylinders upright and secure so that they won't tip over.
- Keep them away from sources of flame, sparks, heat, or electricity.
- Never use cylinders for unintended uses, such as supports, platforms, etc.
- Don't get oil, grease, or other flammable substances on cylinders.
- Open valves and safety caps by hand—not with tools. If they won't open by hand, don't use.



"So, 'Bill'! What do you think my chances are of moving into a supervisory position?"

Union Fire Safety

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Overheated Clothes Dryers Can Cause Fires

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The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that in 1988, clothes dryers were associated with 15,600 fires, which resulted in 20 deaths and 370 injuries. Fires can occur when lint builds up in the dryer or in the exhaust duct. Lint can block the flow of air, cause excessive heat build up, and result in a fire in some dryers.

To Prevent Fires:

-Clean the lint screen/filter before or after each load of clothes. If clothing is still damp at the end of a typical drying cycle or drying requires longer times than normal, this may be a sign that the lint screen or exhaust duct is blocked.

-Clean the dryer vent and exhaust duct periodically. Check the outside vent while the dryer is operating to make sure exhaust air is escaping. If it is not, the vent or the exhaust may be blocked. To remove a blockage in the exhaust path, it may be necessary to disconnect the exhaust duct from the dryer. Remember to reconnect the ducting to the dryer and outside vent before using the dryer again.

-Clean behind the dryer, where lint can build up. Have a qualified service person clean the interior of the dryer chassis periodically to minimize the amount of lint accumulation. Keep the area around the dryer clean and free of clutter.

-Replace plastic or foil, accordion-type ducting material with rigid or corrugated semi-rigid metal duct. Most manufacturers specify the use of a rigid or corrugated semi-rigid metal duct, which provides maximum airflow. The flexible plastic or foil type duct can more easily trap lint and is more susceptible to kinks or crushing, which can greatly reduce the airflow.

-Take special care when drying clothes that have been soiled with volatile chemicals such as gasoline, cooking oils, cleaning agents or finishing oil/stains. If possible wash the clothing more than once to minimize the amount of volatile chemicals on the clothes and, preferably, hang dry the clothes. If using a dryer, use the lowest heat setting and a drying cycle that has a cool-down period at the end of the cycle. To prevent clothes from igniting after drying, do not leave the dried clothes in the dryer or piled in a laundry basket.