



Guidance on the periodic testing of transportable gas cylinders used for fire fighting

FIA Guidance for the Fire Protection Industry

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Contents

1.	Background.....	4
2.	Periodic testing.....	4

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1. Background

There is currently some confusion on the date at which cylinders containing extinguishing agents are required to be submitted for periodic testing under the Pressure Equipment Directive, the Transportable Pressure Equipment Directive, and The Carriage Regulations as stated in the relevant British Standards.

This FIA guidance gives recommendations on how fire extinguishing systems cylinders should be treated.

2. Periodic testing

BS EN 1968:2002, British Standard for Transportable gas cylinders - Periodic inspection and testing of seamless steel gas cylinders, BS EN 1802:2002, British Standard for Transportable gas cylinders - Periodic inspection and testing of seamless aluminium alloy gas cylinders, BS EN 1803:2002, British Standard for Transportable gas cylinders - Periodic inspection and testing of welded carbon steel gas cylinders, all state, in clause 3, that:

- In the case of cylinders used for emergency purposes (e.g. fire extinguishers, breathing apparatus), it is the responsibility of the person in possession (owner or user) to submit it for periodic inspection within the interval specified in Annex B.
- In Annex B the interval for CO₂, Nitrogen and Argon cylinders is 10 years.

"The Safe Use of Gas Cylinders" - a guidance document issued by the Health and Safety Executive - under the heading "How to reduce risks", sub heading "periodic examination" makes references to Instruction P200 in ADR, as required by the Carriage Regulations. Instruction P200 also gives the periodic inspection intervals for CO₂, Nitrogen and Argon cylinders as 10 years.

Therefore, all extinguishing agent cylinders (e.g. FM200, Inergen, Argon, Argonite, Nitrogen and CO₂ etc) that are found to be 10 years old or more, their owner must be notified that the cylinders must be inspected, re-tested and certified accordingly.

Note: The previous dispensation, under BS5430 Part 1 and Part 2, for fire protection cylinders to have re testing deferred to 20 years no longer applies.

3. References

- SAFE USE OF GAS CYLINDERS , HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/cdg/pdf/safusgc.pdf>
- The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2007(CDG 2007)
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/cdg/manual/adrcarriage.htm>
- ADR 2009, UNECE
<http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/adr/adr2009/09ContentsE.html>