

Dear Customer

Safe collection of contaminated medical gas cylinders

From time to time, it is inevitable that medical gas cylinders may become "contaminated" to the extent that any person required to handle them may be exposed to possible risk. This normally involves cylinders being contaminated with bodily products from patients.

It is the responsibility of the Health Service to return all cylinders to the supplier in a safe condition. However, as cylinders need to be handled by BOC personnel, BOC Medical has reviewed its procedures for collection of contaminated medical gas cylinders and is introducing a new cylinder bagging process to protect personnel involved in handling such cylinders. This revised protocol has been developed to ensure that cylinders are dealt with safely in order to minimise risk for everyone concerned.

The new procedure for the collection of potentially contaminated cylinders is specified below and should be followed in all cases. On identification of a contaminated cylinder, the Healthcare facility should:

- Isolate:** Where a medical gas cylinder is suspected of, or is visibly contaminated by blood, faeces, pus or other bodily products from patients, **isolate** the cylinder in a suitable storage area on your site.
Clean it with **warm water** to remove any solids and as much fluid contaminants as possible and leave it to dry.
Do **not** use any proprietary cleaning agents as these may damage the valve or cylinder.
- Bag:** Once dry, place each medical gas cylinder in the special "Contaminated bag" supplied by BOC Medical and secure with a cable tie.
A small supply of new "contaminated cylinder bags", for use when returning contaminated BOC medical gas cylinders, is enclosed with this letter.
- Notify:** Notify BOC Medical on 0800 111 333 that you have a contaminated cylinder for collection and we will make suitable arrangements for collection.

Additional supplies of "contaminated cylinder bags" can be supplied as required by calling BOC Medical's Customer Service Centre direct on 0800 111 333 or asking your Medical Gas Account Manager.

Please note that medical gas cylinders that are suspected of being contaminated by viral or bacterial agents such as MRSA need only be cleaned down with **warm water** and dried prior to collection and do not need to be bagged.

BOC Medical will collect all contaminated cylinders which you have cleaned and bagged for safe transportation. We will then be able to maintain the isolation of these cylinders until they can be appropriately cleaned and quality checked, ready to be safely put back into circulation for the treatment of patients.

Please ensure all personnel involved with cylinder handling at your site are informed of this process. Meanwhile, should you have any questions or issues relating to this process to deal with medical gas cylinder contamination, please call our customer service team on 0800 111 333 and we will make every effort to help resolve your concerns.

Yours sincerely



Andy Clapham
Regional Operations Manager