

Tool Box Talk – Compressed Gas Cylinder Hazards

- Compressed gas cylinders present several potential hazards to welders. The main hazards are fire, explosion, and cylinders propelled by escaping gas when valves are broken (a cylinder can be propelled like a rocket).
- Whether you are using, transporting or storing cylinders, always keep them secured in their upright position with chains, strong wire, or straps.
- Keep them away from all sources of electricity, sparks, flames, and other sources of heat. Avoid subjecting them to heat over 125 degrees Fahrenheit. When they are not being used, always protect the valves by replacing the valve protection caps.
- Store oxygen cylinders separately from acetylene or other gas fuel cylinders. Separate them by at least 20 feet or a ½-hour rated noncombustible barrier at least 5 feet high.
- Never take cylinders into confined spaces.
- Inspect all cylinders, hoses, valves, and torches before using them. Take all defective parts out of service immediately and replace them with good ones. Clean out torch tips before use. Also, before connecting a regulator to a cylinder valve, clean out the valve by standing to one side and quickly open and close the valve.
- Inspect hoses and torch valves for leaks after opening the cylinder valve. If there are any leaks, turn the cylinder valves off immediately. Take the hoses and torch assembly out of service.
- Use only friction lighters to light torches. Never light a torch with a match, cigarette, or any other source.
- Before removing a regulator, close the cylinder valve and bleed the gas lines.

Be sure to leave the wrench on the stem of the cylinder valve so it can be turned off quickly in an emergency.