

## Cylinder Handling

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Change has a tendency to bring out resistance in most of us. For example, look how long it has taken to get people to wear seat belts. What has it been, 30 to 40 years since seat belts were first offered in cars and trucks? Today the compliance is better than it has ever been, but we still have people that resist wearing seat belts for a variety of reasons. It's a proven fact that seat belts save lives, but that doesn't seem to matter to some people. It takes years and sometime generations to get people to accept change. This resistance to change seems to be part of our makeup as humans.

We are currently experiencing change in our industry and sometimes it is not easily accepted. Take, for example, the way we handle and move cylinders. For the most part the industry is moving away from manually handling cylinders in favor of using hand trucks or carts, but there has been push back by some and the progress has been slow. Some employers and employees are resisting this change. Excuses such as, "we've always done it this way" are prevalent in some places. But this change is the right thing to consider. Manually handling cylinders could unnecessarily expose employees to ergonomic stresses.

Cylinders, for the most part, full or empty, are big, heavy, awkward and hard to move safely. Rolling cylinders is a technique that must be learned. It is not something that comes naturally. Employees learn this technique by first rolling one cylinder at a time and later by rolling and kicking two cylinders at a time. With a great deal of practice, employees can become good at moving cylinders over significant distances. However, this method of moving cylinders exposes the employee to several ergonomic stressors that put them at risk of injury.

There may be an opportunity here to implement change and overcome some of the resistance to change. If you currently allow employees to roll cylinders you may want to consider not allowing new employees to roll cylinders. As new employees are hired, don't allow them to become good at rolling cylinders. Start the new employee out by using a cylinder cart to move cylinders.

### Safe Handling of Gas Cylinders

The following points are offered as recommendations that may help reduce the exposure to potential employee injury while handling or moving gas cylinders. Be sure your employees are trained in the proper handling techniques that you use for handling and moving cylinders.

- Cylinders should be moved in hand trucks or carts specifically designed for moving cylinders.
- Always use properly designed four-wheeled hand trucks in good operating condition to move cryogenic liquefied gas containers.
- Keep designated aisles free of obstructions so that cylinders can be moved safely.
- Avoid congestion in cylinder movement areas.
- Keep the floors in good repair.
- If cylinders must be moved or lifted from one level to another use a lift specifically designed for cylinder movement or utilize a cylinder cage or cradle.
- Always wear safety shoes, leather gloves and safety glasses when handling cylinders. Other PPE requirements may be appropriate.