

# The Cylinders In Fire National Stakeholder Group

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[http://www.bcgaco.uk/preview/news/Cylinders\\_in\\_Fire-The\\_National\\_Stakeholder\\_Group.pdf](http://www.bcgaco.uk/preview/news/Cylinders_in_Fire-The_National_Stakeholder_Group.pdf)

## Background

The Cylinders In Fire National Stakeholder Group (CIF-NSG) was formed in November 2006 to collectively understand and resolve the issues surrounding cylinders involved in a fire and in particular with Dissolved Acetylene (DA) cylinders.

A number of different groups had previously started to do individual work in this area and the primary aim of the stakeholder group was to share understanding and stop any duplication of effort, in order to get to an expedient outcome.

## Objectives

The objectives of the group have been agreed and signed up to by all members. These are:

- Ensure all incidents involving cylinders continue to be managed safely
- Ensure disruption is maintained at a minimum consistent with the risk
- Reduce the number of incidents involving cylinders
- Explore and develop with all stakeholders options for safe and timely resolution

The NSG set an initial timeframe of achieving all the objectives by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007. However it is envisaged that some of the work streams may need to continue into 2008.

## Members of the CIF-NSG

The CIF-NSG comprises representatives of the following organisations:

- Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)
- British Compressed Gases Association (BCGA) (Industry experts)
- Department for Transport (DfT)
- Fire Protection Association (FPA)
- Fire and Rescue Service (F&RS), made up of
  - Fire and Resilience Directorate (part of CLG)
  - London Fire Brigade
  - Manchester Fire Brigade representing the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Highways Agency
- Network Rail

Each representative speaks on behalf of their representative organisation, without prejudice of personal views. It is the responsibility of each representative to feedback to their organisation and to ensure any related organisations are kept up to date with the work of the CIF-NSG. This is particularly important to ensure that work is not duplicated.

The CIF-NSG members meet formally (approximately) every quarter. Each meeting is chaired by an independent facilitator and full minutes are published.

The CIF-NSG makes decisions through collective and mutual agreement, in line with the objectives.

## Activities of the CIF-NSG

To date the CIF-NSG has initiated work in three main areas. These are:

1. Information gathering
2. Active management techniques
3. Reduction and prevention of incidents

### 1. Information Gathering

London Fire Brigade has initiated a study of all their cylinder incidents since 2003. This study has been extended to Manchester Fire Brigade. This will provide statistics with regards to cylinder incidents to help understand the issue in greater depth.

The industry has also conducted a review of scientific studies undertaken on DA cylinders. All industry knowledge has been collected and has helped increase the CIF-NSG understanding of DA as well as help negate some areas of common misconception (see outputs section).

## 2. Active Management Techniques

The CIF-NSG has looked at a broad range of possible proactive options for dealing with cylinders involved in a fire. This has been narrowed down to:

- Trials of remote operated vehicles (ROV's). Two trials are underway, one with the LFB using QinetiQ ROV's and the Highways Agency using EOD ROV's
- Investigation of other methods used in some European countries.
- Possible blast containment/shielding where this might be realistic

## 3. Reduction and prevention of incidents

The NSG is working on various publications to reinforce good practise to users of cylinders.

The HSE has clarified user obligations under the Dangerous Substances and Explosives Regulations (DSEAR)

The industry has looked into ways of helping the F&RS better identify DA cylinders from other types of gas cylinder

## Outputs and Recommendations of the CIF-NSG

Currently many of the work streams are in progress so it is too soon to draw conclusions and make any recommendations. However some early findings and initial outputs are:

- It is mandatory to use Flash back Arrestors on any fuel gas equipment
- All BCGA members that supply DA will be fitting retro reflective tape to DA cylinders to help the F&RS identify these cylinders (particularly in dark or fire damaged areas)
- Preliminary findings of the data gathering show that no DA cylinder has reheated or failed after passing the wetting test, when it has been involved in a fire. (Please note the current procedures remain in place until notified otherwise).
- The CIF-NSG does not endorse shooting of DA cylinders at this time. This is further supported by ACPO who currently endorse this view.
- A gap analysis of the DA scientific studies has lead to the proposal for more research in some areas. This work could yield a new methodology for dealing with cylinders involved in fire incidents
- The Welding Institute (TWI) has compiled an independent report (not commissioned by the CIF-NSG or any of its members) looking at alternative gases to DA. This is available on the TWI website.
- The BCGA has secured agreement from Ebay to ban the sale of a number of gas cylinders including DA on their website.
- The BCGA has developed a model risk assessment tool to help fuel gas users comply with DSEAR.

## Further Information

For more information or queries relating to the work of the CIF-NSG, please contact the following:

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