



**B&R Compliance Associates LLC**  
*Regulatory Update Bulletin*

**Bulletin  
Number**  
**BR08-002**

1/16/08

**Abusive Use of Nitrous Oxide**

Page 1 of 1

B&R Compliance Associates, Members of the Gases and Welding Distributors Association (GAWDA) and the Compressed Gas Association (CGA) are joined by the medical profession, law enforcement, government and the media, in expressing concern over the abusive use of nitrous oxide, which has resulted in deaths and injuries.

Theft of cylinders has made nitrous oxide available to people who are seeking the euphoric qualities of the gas, but who are unaware of the hazards of abusing nitrous oxide. The abuse of nitrous oxide can impair an individual's ability to make and implement life-sustaining decisions, and can cause death by reducing the oxygen necessary to support life.

GAWDA and the CGA recommend the following guidelines for Nitrous Oxide Sales and Security. These guidelines are intended to help identify and implement responsible control measures that will minimize the theft of nitrous oxide and deter its abuse. It is recommended that re-packagers and distributors (anyone who transfers nitrous oxide from a bulk vessel to cylinders, and anyone who sells nitrous oxide to medical, industrial, food, and other legitimate users):

- Establish a written sales policy that identifies legitimate applications for nitrous oxide, that may include but is not limited to medical, industrial and food-based uses;
- Restrict sale of nitrous oxide to those who can substantiate the legitimate use of nitrous oxide, as enumerated above;
- Sell only denatured (e.g., rendered unfit for human consumption) nitrous oxide for enhancing performance of internal combustion engines, so as to deter abuse;
- Screen existing nitrous oxide accounts to assure that all are legitimate users of nitrous oxide;
- Provide customers with a current MSDS and any additional instructions for proper use and safe handling practices;
- Take the following steps to prevent the theft of nitrous oxide cylinders, both full and empty, since empty cylinders may also contain residual product:
  - Keep cylinders in a secure area when on company premises;
  - Do not leave a delivery vehicle unattended without limiting access to nitrous oxide cylinders;
  - Keep an inventory of both full and empty cylinders and investigate any discrepancies;
  - Report any thefts promptly to the police and the supplier;
- Alert employees and customers to the dangers of nitrous oxide abuse and train them on the special security measures they should take to prevent its theft.

**For more information on this subject, or any other medical gases compliance issue please contact Ron Ball at (317) 297-8518, or [ron.ball@brcompliance.com](mailto:ron.ball@brcompliance.com).**