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Developed By: University Department of Safety and Health

## Standard Operating Procedure For Poisonous/Toxic Gases

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide standard operating procedures for laboratory personnel when working with poisonous gases.

### **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)**

#### *Hazard Communication Labeling*

Laboratory entrance door must have a label that states the following:

**DANGER!**  
**Poisonous Gas**  
**Inhalation Hazard**  
**Authorized Personnel Only**

#### *Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)/Training*

1. Review material safety data sheets (MSDS) prior to working with any poisonous gas. MSDS must be posted on or near the gas cylinder(s) accompanied with this SOP.
2. Emergency spill and safe handling training must be performed prior to working with poisonous gases. Training will be documented. Contact the University Department of Safety and Health to schedule training.

#### *Handling*

1. All work with poisonous gases must be conducted in a working chemical fume hood to prevent exposure by inhalation (if feasible).
2. Proper personal protection equipment should be worn at all times to prevent eye and skin contact (i.e. safety glasses; splash shields; gloves; laboratory coat/apron).
3. No work with poisonous gases will be performed alone. A second person familiar with the dangers and emergency procedures for handling these materials must be present at all times within the laboratory while operations are being carried out.
4. Do not drag, roll, slide or drop cylinder. Use a suitable hand truck for cylinder movement. Never attempt to lift a cylinder by its cap.

5. Secure cylinders at all times while in use.
6. Only use approved regulators and valves. **Consult you gas supplier for approved regulators and valves.**
7. Once cylinder has been connected to process, open valve slowly and carefully. If experiencing difficulty operating cylinder valve, discontinue use and contact supplier. Forced freeing of “frozen” or corroded valve should **NOT** be attempted.
8. Regulators and valves should be kept free of moisture. Purge system with dry inert gas (e.g. helium, nitrogen, argon, etc.) before the product is introduced and when system is out of service.
9. The main valve on the all the poisonous gas cylinders must be closed at all times when the cylinders are not in use.
10. Carbon steel, stainless steel, Monel or copper are suitable materials for regulators and valves for use when no moisture is present. Hastelloy, platinum or gold offer good resistance to corrosion when moisture is present. Kel-F or Teflon are the preferred gasket materials.
11. Pressure requirements should be considered when selecting materials and designing systems.

#### *Storage*

1. Store cylinders in a well ventilated, secure area, protected from the weather.
2. Cylinders of poisonous gases should be stored in locations appropriate for compressed gas storage and separated from incompatible compounds.
3. Cylinders must be stored upright with valve outlet seals and valve protection caps in place.
4. Do not allow storage temperature to exceed 125 degrees F.
5. Store cylinders away from heavily traveled areas and emergency exits.
6. Visually inspect cylinders on a routine basis, at least weekly, for any indication of leakage or other problems.

#### *Emergency Procedures*

1. In case of accidental release of a poisonous gas, such as a leaking cylinder, turn off all ignition sources (if time permits), evacuate the area immediately and close the door. Immediately implement the University’s emergency spill response plan.
2. In the event personnel have become contaminated immediately implement personal decontamination procedures. Skin contact, immediately wash with soap and water and remove contaminated clothing.
3. Eye contact, promptly wash with copious amounts of water for 15 minutes. Call 9-911 for immediate medical attention.
4. If inhaled, remove to fresh air and call 9-911 for immediate medical attention.
5. The MSDS sheet for the poisonous gas should be brought to the hospital to aid in treatment.

### *Leak Detection*

1. The system should be carefully leak-tested prior to introduction of any poisonous gas into the system, periodically thereafter, and after any maintenance or modifications to the system which could affect its integrity. Appropriate personal protection equipment must be worn when testing for leaks. If leak is detected implement the emergency procedures as state above.
2. Atmospheric monitoring equipment with audible alarms **must** be installed to alert laboratory personnel of a possible poisonous gas release. The fixed detector should be place near the system to provide accurate readings. The alarm should be loud enough so that it will alert laboratory personnel upon entering the room.