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Memo

To	Safety Co-ordinators (for onward transmission to Heads of School, School Safety Advisors
From	Dr Melanie Taylor, University Safety Advisor
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Distribution	Dr S A Robson
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Gas cylinders – colour coding

Many of you will already know that the colour coding of gas cylinders will change as standards are harmonised across Europe. In the UK, BS EN 1089:3 will come into effect from 1 July 2006, and some suppliers are advising that the changeover will commence from Autumn 2005. The changes will affect all industrial, medical and special products gas cylinders, although BOC advise that it will take up to 5 years before cylinders already in use are removed from circulation.

One key change is that the cylinder shoulder colour will indicate hazard (eg red = flammable, yellow = toxic or corrosive, light blue = oxidising, bright green = inert, etc). If a gas has more than one hazardous property, the colours will be banded.

BOC have made available a free 1 page flyer, with a summary of the changes, at https://pgw100.portal.gases.boc.com/scripts/wgate/zcpwp_b2c/!?~login=pgwspecial There is also a FAQ section. I am sure other suppliers will also be producing literature for their customers.

School safety staff are therefore advised to exercise particular vigilance during routine monitoring of cylinders and their use; separation of different gases in cylinder stores, and the use of appropriate regulators. Historically, cylinder colour has never been a reliable indicator of gas contents, and the labels on the cylinders should always be used as the primary means of identifying the product and its hazardous properties.

Dr Melanie Taylor
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