

Guidance Note: Oxygen Cleaning Periods – 03/05.

Amendment 02 – 10/11.

We receive frequent enquiries about the “statutory period” for Oxygen cleaning cylinders.

To be clear, there is no statutory period for Oxygen Cleaning.

From a practical perspective, if something is O₂ clean, no matter how long it is since it was last cleaned, it doesn't need cleaning.

A statutory period would cause the gas industry serious logistical problems and significant, unnecessary, expense, to retrieve hundreds of thousands of Oxygen cylinders from their customers, to clean them every year.

However, the diving industry is not able to exercise the same high level of quality control routinely achieved by the gas industry. Additionally, diving cylinders have the potential for ingress of water, making it impossible to guarantee that diving cylinders will remain clean from one inspection to the next.

Therefore, for diving cylinders, used to contain gas mixtures exceeding 25% Oxygen, a more frequent internal inspection and cleaning regime is good and recommended practice.

Early Nitrox handbooks and practice came from the USA where all Scuba cylinders undergo an annual inspection; American “Nitrox” cylinders automatically undergo Oxygen cleaning at the same time. This annual cleaning period was widely adopted and recommended by ASSET, because it fitted within the 2-year inspection period prevailing in the UK up to 2002.

In 2002, EN 1802 and EN 1968 changed the inspection period for Scuba cylinders to 2.5-years, making an annual cleaning period unworkable.

HSE guidance suggests extending the Oxygen cleaning period from twelve to **fifteen months**, in order to fit evenly into the current inspection period; ASSET concurs.

Note: This should be treated as a maximum period. If contamination is suspected or detected, the cylinder should not be filled. Instead, it should be depressurised, opened, inspected and cleaned, regardless of how recently it was last cleaned.

This guidance is offered in good faith and is believed to be correct to the best of our knowledge. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed to override good practice, manufacturers' policies, the relevant Standards and the Law.

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