



Employee overfills LPG cylinder



INCIDENT

A member of the public was burned when her recently-filled LPG cylinder ignited when she lit her barbeque.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The member of the public had taken a 9-kilogram LPG cylinder to a service station in Levin for filling, and afterwards attached it to her barbeque. When she lit the barbeque, flames shot out of the cylinder, singeing her hair as she tried to turn off the valve.

INVESTIGATION

Tests conducted on the cylinder showed that it was overfilled by at least 770g. This occurred because the cylinder filler did not calculate the correct amount of gas for the cylinder.

The water capacity information on the cylinder was illegible because of rust and flaking paint.

The cylinder was also past its ten-year expiry date, and should not have been filled unless it underwent a re-inspection to ensure that it was safe to remain in use before being refilled.

The filler also did not apply correct labelling to the cylinder post-fill.

Despite all of these errors, the cylinder filler proved that he was adequately trained in the safe filling of LPG cylinders. He was subsequently prosecuted for failing to take all practicable steps to ensure the member of the public's safety.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ADVICE

It is the Department's advice that any person filling a compressed gas container with a gas must be an approved filler, as this is a legal requirement under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act). This requirement applies to all compressed gases whether they are hazardous substances such as LPG or non-hazardous gases such as compressed air.

All staff conducting LPG cylinder filling at service stations must receive Approved Filler training to the standards of the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association (LPGA) training programme, and employers must ensure that employee competency is checked regularly.

Employees must ensure that they only fill cylinders if they are Approved Fillers and are trained to the LPGA standard. This involves knowledge of the HSNO Act as well as how to check cylinders and fill them safely.

For further information on gas cylinder safety, see the Environmental Protection Authority's (EPA) Approved Practice Guide *Guide to Gas Cylinders*.

For further information on LPG Approved Filler Training, go to:

- The Liquefied Petroleum Gas Association webpage: www.lpga.co.nz/cylinderFilling.php
- Environmental Protection Authority's webpage: <http://www.epa.govt.nz/hazardous-substances/certifications/people/approved-fillers/Pages/requirements.aspx>

WHICH INDUSTRIES/SECTORS OR MATTERS WILL THIS INFORMATION BE RELEVANT TO?

Service Stations, LPG supply/distribution agents

Note: This material has been prepared using the best information available to the Department of Labour at the time of publication. Information may change over time and it may be necessary for you to obtain an update. This material is also only intended to provide general advice and does not constitute legal advice. You should make your own judgement about action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with your workplace health and safety obligations under the law.

