

Health and Safety Executive OC 278/35

Field Operations Division

To

Agricultural, Factory and Quarries Inspectors

FCG Specialist Inspectors (Fire and Explosion)

IMPORTATION OF ACETYLENE

Introduction

1 This OC outlines the arrangements for the importation of acetylene and the action to be taken if cylinders have been imported without a licence or HSW Act s.6 enforcement is contemplated.

Background

2 The Compressed Acetylene (Importation) Regulations 1978 (file 278) came into force on 6 December 1978. They allow acetylene at pressures above 0.62 bar g but not exceeding 18.0 bar g at a temperature of 15.5° Celsius to be imported into the UK under a licence issued by HSE.

Issue of licences and conditions attached

3 Licences are issued to UK importers by TD 5 to permit the importation of cylinders over a 5 year period subject to specified conditions.

4 Licences will specify standards for the cylindrical shell of the cylinder and require cylinders to be filled with a porous mass approved by HSE.

5 A condition of all licences is that imported acetylene cylinders are returned to the supplier when discharged (ie imported cylinders will not be re-charged by fillers in the UK).

Identification of acetylene cylinders

6 Acetylene cylinders for general use in the UK are coloured maroon and the valve outlet connections have a left hand thread. They are marked in accordance with the requirement of BS 6061: 1981 "Specification for transportable acetylene cylinders", ISO 3807 or the standard HOAC 1 issued by the Home Office. In all cases these standards use the word 'ACETYLENE' or 'ACETYLEN'. Equivalent standards eg CEN may be adopted in the future.

7 Inspectors may also encounter acetylene cylinders coloured brown, and having right hand threads. These are for offshore or marine applications and are not destined for UK industrial use.

Action by inspectors

8 TD 5 should be notified of any case in which it appears that acetylene cylinders have been imported without a licence.

9 Inspectors should consult with TD 5 before considering any enforcement action under s.6 in respect of acetylene cylinders or adaptors necessary for their use.

Annotation and cancellation of instructions

10 FIC IN 142 para 8 heading - delete present note and note "See OC 278/35 paras 8 & 9 if contravention involves imported acetylene cylinders or adaptors".

FIC 278/23 - cancel and destroy.

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ASI headings

Acetylene.