



PROPER RECYCLING COMPRESSED GAS CYLINDERS

A Guide to doing it right in Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

What are some examples of compressed gas or pressurized cylinders?

- Propane tanks (refillable)
- Propane canisters (single-use)
- Fire extinguishers
- Helium tanks

Why should I be concerned about getting rid of these items?

Compressed cylinders are pressurized and when they have not been purged of their contents they can pose a serious risk to health and safety. Even when you think it is empty, a pressurized cylinder will still contain some residual material.

Any cylinder still containing material should be considered hazardous for two reasons:

1. The pressurized cylinder itself has explosive potential, and
2. The materials being stored within may be poisonous or flammable.

Most cylinders are steel with brass fittings both of which are recyclable materials. Some tanks are Aluminum, another recyclable material.

Because of their hazardous nature, many haulers, landfills, recycling centers, and disposal facilities choose not to accept pressurized cylinders.

This leaves residents with few options for recycling or disposal.

What should I do with unwanted pressurized cylinders?

Unfortunately, very limited recycling and disposal options exist locally for residential cylinders. Pressurized cylinders are very expensive to manage.

When possible, buy and use refillable/reusable propane tanks, and ask if it can be returned for recycling or disposal when it's empty or expired. Companies such as Blue Rhino and Amerigas offer tank exchange programs for their customers and recycle unusable cylinders.

Pressurized cylinders should never be thrown in the trash, as the contents could spill or explode when compressed in a garbage truck or other equipment.

Some household hazardous waste collection programs accept cylinders for a fee.

To ensure that your cylinder is safe for handling, it needs to be purged of all contents. Some tanks such as helium tanks have a relief disks that you puncture to ensure the tank is empty.

Contact your local scrap dealer beforehand to inquire about their pressurized cylinder recycling requirements.

<https://lawrencecountypa.gov/departments/recycling-and-solid-waste>

www.mercercountypa.gov/recycling

This publication is funded in part through a grant from the PA Department of Environmental Protection.



(724) 658-6925

