

SANTA ANA POLICE DEPARTMENT

DAVID VALENTIN · CHIEF OF POLICE

TRAINING BULLETIN

"Education promotes professional and responsive law enforcement"

Proper Handling of Nitrous Oxide Tanks

Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to establish procedures on how to safely handle, transport, and dispose of Nitrous Oxide tanks. Additionally, this bulletin will provide guidelines on how to report and document the confiscation and recovery of Nitrous Oxide tanks.

Introduction

Nitrous Oxide, commonly known as NOS, has grown in popularity amongst the adolescent and young adult party scene. Nitrous Oxide can be ingested by directly inhaling it from a pressurized cylinder tank, but is most commonly inhaled from balloons that have been filled from tanks. The pressurized cylindrical tanks vary in sizes but are easily distinguishable and look similar to oxygen tanks. Nitrous Oxide is a *non-hazardous* compressed gas that can be safely handled and transported.

I. Procedure for Handling and Disposing of Nitrous Oxide Tanks

- A. If possible, positively identify the person in possession of the tank(s). This includes an address, a CDL number, a phone number, and a vehicle license plate number. Provide this information to SAFD on an FI card, as well as an incident number or case number, and the recovering officer's name and badge number. If a tank cannot be linked to a person, document the location address of where it was found (i.e., warehouse, residence, abandoned residence/structure, etc.) and place that information on an FI card with a brief explanation indicating the tank was recovered on its own.
- B. Firmly close the tank's nozzle clockwise. **DO NOT** release any gases from any tank. If you are uncertain as to the contents of *any* tank, contact SAFD for removal.
- C. Tanks can be safely transported by securely placing a **MAXIMUM OF TWO** tanks horizontally in your unit's trunk. **DO NOT** transport any tanks in your unit's back seat. If you have more than two tanks, and no additional personnel to assist with transportation, contact the SAFD Haz Mat Team for tank recovery and removal. SAFD should also be contacted if there is any obvious damage to the valve or cylinder.
- D. Transport the tanks to SAFD Station #9 located at 1320 East Warner. Enter via the east driveway gate and press #7109 on the gate keypad.
- E. Locate the cinder block structure near the southwest corner of the station yard. This structure contains recovered tanks, barrels, and other similar-type containers.

- F. Place recovered tanks in the upright position just OUTSIDE and to the right of the structure's entryway. This will notify SAFD personnel of newly confiscated tanks.
- G. Locate the clipboard with a stapler and manila routing tags near the structure's entryway.
- H. Staple a completed FI card to a tag and place the tag around each tank's valve assembly. Complete one FI card for EACH tank recovered from an arrestee or location.

*****Contacting SAFD personnel is NOT necessary to complete this process*****

II. Reporting and Documentation

Personnel responding to a location (abandoned house, warehouse, etc.) where several tanks were located, and the tank owners can not be located, the tanks should be recovered along with completing a brief information report. This will aid the fire department in recovering disposal fees from the property owner. Tanks which can not be traced to a person or property owner should still be transported to Station # 9 with a completed FI card, however no report is necessary.

III. Applicable Penal Codes

A. CPC §381b – Possession of Nitrous Oxide – Misdemeanor

Any person who possesses nitrous oxide or any substance containing nitrous oxide, with the intent to breathe, inhale, or ingest for the purpose of causing a condition of intoxication, elation, euphoria, dizziness, stupefaction, or dulling of the senses or for the purpose of, in any manner, changing, distorting, or disturbing the audio, visual, or mental processes, or who knowingly and with the intent to do so is under the influence of nitrous oxide or any material containing nitrous oxide is guilty of a misdemeanor. This section shall not apply to any person who is under the influence of nitrous oxide or any material containing nitrous oxide pursuant to an administration for the purpose of medical, surgical, or dental care by a person duly licensed to administer such an agent.

B. CPC §381c (b) – Providing Nitrous Oxide to Minor Under 18 - Misdemeanor

Every person who sells, furnishes, administers, distributes, gives away, or offers to sell, furnish, administer, distribute, or give away a device, canister, tank, or receptacle either exclusively containing nitrous oxide or exclusively containing a chemical compound mixed with nitrous oxide, to a person under 18 years of age is guilty of a misdemeanor.

IV. SAFD Haz Mat Team

1320 E. Warner

714-647-5709

Non-emergency inquiries can be made between 0700 and 2200 hours.

Summary

Following this procedure will enhance the safe handling of Nitrous Oxide tanks. Additionally, this procedure will aid the Santa Ana Fire Department in potentially recovering disposal fees. The increased popularity of Nitrous Oxide has adversely impacted the City's budget, thus every effort should be made to identify any person(s) in possession of a Nitrous Oxide tank.

Acknowledgment: Researched and prepared by: Corporal Sergio Enriquez, with technical contribution from SAFD Engineer Brian Hay.

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