



CGA G-8.1 — 2024

6TH EDITION

**STANDARD FOR
NITROUS OXIDE
SYSTEMS AT
CUSTOMER SITES**



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Contents	Page
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Scope	1
3 Definitions.....	3
4 Cautions and warnings.....	4
4.1 Characteristics.....	4
4.2 Warning signs.....	5
5 Security	6
6 Location of large volume nitrous oxide systems.....	7
6.1 General.....	7
6.2 Accessibility.....	8
6.3 Relation to other storage	8
6.4 Lower than adjacent storage.....	8
7 Distance between large volume nitrous oxide systems and exposures.....	8
7.1 Minimum distance.....	8
7.2 Special considerations.....	8
7.3 Ventilation in enclosed areas	8
8 Stationary low pressure liquid nitrous oxide containers	10
8.1 General.....	10
8.2 Requirements	10
8.3 Insulation	10
8.4 Materials.....	10
8.5 Supports and foundations	10
8.6 Storage tank pressures	10
8.7 Vaporizer.....	11
8.8 Additional requirements.....	11
9 Portable nitrous oxide containers	11
9.1 Container requirements.....	11
9.2 Marking.....	11
9.3 Outside storage	11
9.4 Inside storage.....	11
9.5 Separation of stored gases	11
9.6 Restricted access	11
10 High pressure nitrous oxide manifold systems.....	11
10.1 General.....	11
10.2 Location.....	12
10.3 Gas capacity for indoor installations.....	12
10.4 Systems of large capacity	12
10.5 Additional requirements.....	12
11 Piping, tubing, and fittings	12
11.1 General.....	12
11.2 Piping and tubing.....	12
11.3 Pressure relief	12
11.4 Cleaning	13
11.5 Location.....	13
11.6 Piping.....	13
11.7 Sleeving protection.....	13
11.8 Shutoff valves	13
11.9 Labeling and marking	13
11.10 Final system cleaning and testing	13

12	Pressure reducing regulators	13
12.1	General.....	13
12.2	Testing, repair, and maintenance	13
12.3	Union nuts and connections	14
13	Pressure relief devices	14
13.1	General.....	14
13.2	Venting	14
13.3	Protection	14
14	Liquid nitrous oxide vaporizers.....	14
14.1	General.....	14
14.2	Installation	14
14.3	Pressure relief	14
14.4	Heating medium	14
15	Equipment assembly and installation	14
15.1	General.....	14
15.2	Joining and sealing.....	15
15.3	Accessories	15
15.4	Supervision.....	15
15.5	Testing.....	15
15.6	Protection	15
15.7	Ventilation.....	15
16	Operating instructions	15
16.1	Responsibility	15
16.2	Training.....	15
17	Maintenance	15
17.1	Annual inspection and maintenance	15
17.2	Combustibles.....	15
18	General precautions	16
18.1	Testing for leakage.....	16
18.2	Cleanliness.....	16
18.3	Opening valves.....	16
18.4	Removal of regulators	16
18.5	Leakage.....	16
18.6	Safety information.....	16
19	References	16

Tables

Table 1—Physical constants of nitrous oxide	2
Table 2—Properties of saturated liquid	3
Table 3—Minimum separation distance between outdoor stationary insulated liquid nitrous oxide containers and exposure	9

Figures

Figure 1—Warning sign for supply enclosure	5
Figure 2—Warning sign (confined area/limited access).....	5
Figure 3—NFPA hazard label for nitrous oxide liquefied compressed gas.....	6
Figure 4—NFPA hazard label for nitrous oxide refrigerated liquid.....	6
Figure 5—Pressure relief device installation.....	12

1 Introduction

At atmospheric pressure and temperature, nitrous oxide is a colorless, practically odorless, tasteless, and non-toxic gas about 50% heavier than air. It is quite soluble in water, vegetable oils, and other liquids. Its main use is as an anesthetic. It is also used as a propellant in pressure package containers, in analytical instruments, as a leak detector, and in other specialized applications.

Nitrous oxide is available in the compressed, liquefied form either in high pressure containers or low pressure insulated containers conforming to the specifications of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Transport Canada (TC) or in relatively low pressure bulk containers maintained at reduced temperatures. Below the critical point of 97.7 °F (36.5 °C) liquid nitrous oxide is in equilibrium with its vapor at a pressure dependent upon the temperature. For specific data see the *Handbook of Compressed Gases* [1].¹ Under normal conditions of storage and use, nitrous oxide is stable in both gas and liquid phases and is noncorrosive. It does not form an acid in water.

As with oxygen, ignition of combustible materials can occur more readily in a nitrous oxide-enriched atmosphere than in air with combustion proceeding at a faster rate. Nitrous oxide also decomposes exothermally under conditions of high temperature and pressure. If sufficient heat is added, the decomposition can be self-sustaining and with the resulting high temperature and pressure, the nitrous oxide can explode. Refer to CGA G-8.3, *Safe Practices for the Storage and Handling of Nitrous Oxide* [2]. Therefore, this standard provides primarily for protection of the nitrous oxide system from fire from sources apart from the system itself. It is important to locate nitrous oxide systems in well-ventilated locations since nitrous oxide-enriched atmospheres can collect temporarily in confined areas in the event of the functioning of a pressure relief device (PRD) or leakage from the system.

The properties of nitrous oxide are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

2 Scope

This standard covers the general principles recommended for the installation of nitrous oxide systems on medical or industrial customer premises.

Such systems consist of a central supply, which can be either cylinders connected to a common manifold or bulk liquid containers and the associated equipment and piping required for connecting the central supply to the line supplying the nitrous oxide to the point of use.

The authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) may authorize the continued use of an existing nitrous oxide system, which is not in strict compliance with the provisions of this standard, where such continued use will not constitute a hazard to life or adjacent property.

This standard does not apply to nitrous oxide manufacturing plants and normally does not apply to distributor bulk stations. However, where distributor bulk stations interface closely with business or facilities unrelated to the handling of nitrous oxide, or where the general public can be exposed to such bulk facilities, the applicable safety provisions of this standard shall be followed.

Additional requirements for nitrous oxide systems are contained in NFPA 99, *Health Care Facilities Code*, NFPA 55, *Compressed Gases and Cryogenic Fluids Code*, and CSA Z305.1, *Nonflammable Medical Gas Piping Systems* [3, 4, 5].

¹ References are shown by bracketed numbers and are listed in order of appearance in the reference section.