



**CGA P-8—2022
GUIDELINE FOR
SAFE PRACTICES FOR
CRYOGENIC AIR SEPARATION
PLANTS**

**SEVENTH EDITION
(Corrected 11/16/2022)**

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PREFACE:

As part of a program of harmonization of industry standards, the Compressed Gas Association (CGA) has published CGA P-8, *Guideline for Safe Practices for Cryogenic Air Separation Plants*, jointly produced by members of the International Harmonization Council.

This publication is intended as an international harmonized standard for the worldwide use and application of all members of the Asia Industrial Gases Association (AIGA), Compressed Gas Association (CGA), European Industrial Gases Association (EIGA), and Japan Industrial and Medical Gases Association (JIMGA). Each association's technical content is identical, except for regional regulatory requirements and minor changes in formatting and spelling.

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Contents	Page
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Scope	1
3 Typical air separation unit features	1
4 Definitions.....	3
5 Health hazards	8
5.1 Cryogenic liquids	8
5.2 Gas products	8
5.3 Asphyxiation	8
5.4 Oxygen hazards	9
5.5 Protective clothing and personal protective equipment.....	10
6 General plant considerations.....	10
6.1 Site selection	10
6.2 Safety factors in plant layouts.....	11
6.3 Materials of construction.....	11
6.4 Insulation—other than coldbox	12
6.5 Cleaning	13
6.6 Electrical requirements.....	13
6.7 Noise	13
7 Intake air quality	13
7.1 Contaminants	13
7.2 Reactive contaminants that concentrate in oxygen.....	15
7.3 Reactive contaminants that concentrate in nitrogen.....	16
7.4 Plugging components.....	16
7.5 Haze and smoke from fires.....	16
7.6 Contaminant sources.....	17
7.7 Identification of contaminants.....	17
7.8 Location of air intake	18
7.9 Monitoring intake air	18
8 Compressors	18
8.1 Axial compressors	18
8.2 Centrifugal compressors.....	18
8.3 Other dynamic compressor considerations	19
8.4 Reciprocating compressors	20
8.5 Diaphragm compressors	22
8.6 Rotary positive displacement compressors.....	22
8.7 Refrigerant gas compressors	22
8.8 Screw compressors.....	22
8.9 Lubrication systems.....	22
8.10 Coolers and separators	24
8.11 Suction filters or screens	24
8.12 Special considerations for oxygen service	25
8.13 Operating and maintenance procedures	25
9 Air contaminant removal.....	25
9.1 Removal methods.....	25
9.2 Contaminant removal stages.....	27
9.3 Prepurification unit operation.....	28
9.4 Reverse heat exchanger operation	30
9.5 Supplemental mechanical chillers	33
9.6 Caustic scrubbers.....	33

10	Expanders	33
10.1	Loss of loading and overspeed	34
10.2	Oil contamination of the process	34
10.3	Failure of shaft seals	35
10.4	Abnormally low temperatures	35
10.5	Solids in gas stream	36
10.6	Loss of lubrication	36
10.7	Abnormal bearing temperature	36
10.8	Abnormal vibration	36
10.9	Abnormal speed	37
10.10	Critical speed	37
10.11	Fouling of expander with ice or carbon dioxide	37
10.12	Startup and shutdown	37
10.13	Operating and maintenance procedures	37
11	Cryogenic pumps	38
11.1	General	38
11.2	Types of pumps	38
11.3	Materials of construction	39
11.4	Pump system design	39
11.5	Special considerations for oxygen service	40
11.6	Pump motor	40
11.7	Pump operation	40
11.8	Operating and maintenance procedures	41
12	Coldbox	41
12.1	Removing particulate material	41
12.2	Cryogenic adsorbers	41
12.3	Liquid levels	43
12.4	Monitoring contaminants	43
12.5	Argon separation and purification	44
12.6	Noncondensable purge	45
12.7	Coldbox cleaning	46
12.8	Safe holding time for liquid oxygen	46
12.9	Liquefaction of air in the main heat exchanger	46
12.10	Air separation unit operation with process leaks into the cryogenic enclosure insulation space	46
12.11	Brazed aluminum heat exchangers (E-AHXs) in cyclic service	47
12.12	Process upsets	47
12.13	Operation and maintenance	49
13	Control systems	51
13.1	Instrumented systems functions	51
13.2	Critical safety systems	51
13.3	Operational safety systems	52
13.4	Routine plant operation control systems	52
13.5	Unattended or partially attended operation	53
13.6	Remote operation	53
13.7	Additional considerations for computer-based control systems	54
13.8	Additional considerations for failsafe systems	54
13.9	Alarm system	54
13.10	Regulatory considerations	55
14	Product handling equipment	55
14.1	Liquid storage	55
14.2	High pressure gas storage vessels	56
14.3	Liquid vaporizers	57
15	Cooling systems	57

16	Plant piping.....	58
16.1	General design considerations for plant piping	58
16.2	General design considerations for check valves	58
16.3	Expansion joints	58
16.4	Oxygen piping hazards.....	58
16.5	Pressure relief devices	58
16.6	Cryogenic piping.....	60
16.7	Dead legs	60
16.8	Carbon steel piping	60
16.9	Venting	60
16.10	Product delivery.....	61
16.11	Leak detection and response in plant piping/components	61
17	Shutdown procedures	61
17.1	Coldbox shutdown.....	62
17.2	Liquid and gas disposal.....	62
17.3	Plant derime	63
18	Repair and inspection.....	63
18.1	General maintenance considerations	63
18.2	Supervisory control.....	63
18.3	Special construction and repair considerations	63
18.4	Coldbox hazards.....	64
18.5	Hazards of working in oxygen-enriched or oxygen-deficient atmospheres	64
18.6	Cleaning	65
19	Operations and training.....	65
19.1	Operating procedures.....	65
19.2	Commissioning procedures.....	65
19.3	Emergency procedures	65
19.4	Management of change.....	66
19.5	Personnel training.....	66
20	References	67
Figures		
	Figure 1—Example of an air separation plant flow diagram	2
	Figure 2—Example of mitigations against backflow/reverse flow	49
Tables		
	Table 1—Effects at various oxygen breathing levels	9
	Table 2—Plugging, reactive, and corrosive contaminants in air	14
	Table 3—Typical default air quality design basis	14
	Table 4—Typical removal in VPU process.....	27
	Table 5—Typical removal in REVEX process.....	28
	Table 6—Cryogenic adsorber names	42

1 Introduction

This publication provides guidance on the safe operation of cryogenic air separation plants. It is based on the experience of CGA member companies that operate cryogenic air separation units (ASUs).

Industrial cryogenic air separation has some potential hazards that must be recognized and addressed. The hazards include electricity, gases under pressure, very low temperatures, the ability of oxygen to accelerate combustion, and the asphyxiant properties of nitrogen, argon, and the rare gases [1].¹

Cryogenic air separation technology is not static; it has been progressing for decades and will continue to do so because of engineering development efforts. Consequently, plant process cycles, equipment, and operating conditions can be and are of varying kinds. Therefore, this publication includes generalized statements and recommendations on matters for which there is a diversity of opinion or practice. Users of this guide should recognize that it is presented with the understanding that it cannot take the place of sound engineering judgment, training, and experience. It does not constitute, and should not be construed to be, a code of rules or regulations.

2 Scope

This publication serves the interest of those associated or concerned with air separation plant operations and applies to safety in the design, location, construction, installation, operation, and maintenance of cryogenic air separation plants. Emphasis is placed on equipment and operational and maintenance features that are specific to cryogenic air separation processes. Limited coverage is given to plant equipment, such as air compressors, which are used in other industrial applications and for which safe practices in design, installation, and use have already been established elsewhere. Further, as this publication is not intended as a universal safe practice manual for specific design and safety features, it is also important to refer to the operating manuals of the equipment suppliers.

Any new design and installation requirements contained in this publication only apply to new installations begun after the time of publication and not to existing installations. However, new requirements and recommendations may be considered by the user for existing operating units or those in the project phase.

The following are excluded from this publication:

- cylinder filling facilities;
- rare gas purification systems; and
- product transmission piping outside the plant boundaries.

3 Typical air separation unit features

Cryogenic ASUs have these features:

- air compression;
- air contaminant removal;
- heat exchange;
- distillation; and
- expansion (or other refrigeration sources).

Figure 1 is an example of a flow diagram for separating air by cryogenic distillation producing oxygen, nitrogen, and argon products. Air is compressed in the main air compressor (MAC) to between 4 atm and 10 atm. It is then cooled to ambient temperature. Trace contaminants such as water, carbon dioxide, and heavy hydrocarbons are removed using systems such as a prepurification unit (PPU) or a reversing heat exchanger (REVEX). The main heat exchanger cools the air to near its liquefaction temperature before entering the high pressure distillation

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