



## **BRITISH COMPRESSED GASES ASSOCIATION**

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## **GUIDANCE NOTE 44**

**PORTABLE OR MOBILE CYLINDER GAS EQUIPMENT –  
THOROUGH INSPECTION**

2021

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Website:  
[www.bcgga.co.uk](http://www.bcgga.co.uk)

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## PREFACE

The British Compressed Gases Association (BCGA) was established in 1971, formed out of the British Acetylene Association, which existed since 1901. BCGA members include gas producers, suppliers of gas handling equipment and users operating in the compressed gas field.

The main objectives of the Association are to further technology, to promote safe practice and to prioritise environmental protection in the supply, use, storage, transportation and handling of industrial, food and medical gases, and we produce a host of publications to this end. BCGA also provides advice and makes representations on behalf of its Members to regulatory bodies, including the UK Government.

Policy is determined by a Council elected from Member Companies, with detailed technical studies being undertaken by a Technical Committee and its specialist Sub-Committees appointed for this purpose.

BCGA makes strenuous efforts to ensure the accuracy and current relevance of its publications, which are intended for use by technically competent persons. However, this does not remove the need for technical and managerial judgement in practical situations. Nor do they confer any immunity or exemption from relevant legal requirements, including by-laws.

For the assistance of users, references are given, either in the text or Appendices, to publications such as British, European and International Standards and Codes of Practice, and current legislation that may be applicable but no representation or warranty can be given that these references are complete or current.

BCGA publications are reviewed, and revised if necessary, at five-yearly intervals, or sooner where the need is recognised. Readers are advised to check the Association's website to ensure that the copy in their possession is the current version.

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\* Throughout this publication the numbers in <sup>[1]</sup> brackets refer to references in Section 6. Documents referenced are the edition current at the time of publication, unless otherwise stated.

## TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Cylinder	A transportable pressure receptacle of a water capacity not exceeding 150 litres.
Gas supply mobile pressure equipment	One or two gas cylinders, with their accessories, mounted on a mobile frame or trolley, where the flow of gas from each cylinder is individually controlled by a cylinder-mounted pressure regulator. The equipment design enables each gas to pass through various safety devices and hoses to a downstream application. For oxy-fuel use, for example, gases are mixed at the blowpipe just prior to ignition.
Independent Safety Inspector	A person who is competent to undertake inspection and maintenance activities as described in this Guidance Note, particularly in Section 5. The person shall have sufficient independence to ensure objectivity in their activities, i.e. shall not be the day-to-day equipment operator of the equipment under inspection.
May	Indicates an option available to the user of this Guidance Note.
Shall	Indicates a mandatory requirement for compliance with this Guidance Note and may also indicate a mandatory requirement within UK law.
Should	Indicates a preferred requirement but is not mandatory for compliance with this Guidance Note.

# GUIDANCE NOTE 44

## PORTABLE OR MOBILE CYLINDER GAS EQUIPMENT - THOROUGH INSPECTION

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Gas supply mobile pressure equipment requires the use of hazardous substances, i.e. gases. The gas supply equipment shall be:

- suitable for the application;
- capable of managing the gas pressure, temperature and flow; and
- safe and serviceable throughout its operational life.

A thorough inspection shall be carried out at suitable intervals, and typically annually, by a competent Independent Safety Inspector. Aside from the time interval, other factors may prompt a thorough examination, such as time-in-use, incidents or near-misses, observed defects, external events, supplier's safety alerts, issues with similar equipment, etc. The thorough inspection should form part of the *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations* <sup>[3]</sup> duty-holder's inspection, maintenance and monitoring arrangements, which shall also include assembly checks, pre- and post-use checks, periodic maintenance, surveillance, etc.

This document provides guidance to assist an Independent Safety Inspector in carrying out the thorough inspection. It cites some of the relevant legislation applicable in the UK, and it includes suggested checklists for commonly encountered items.

Premises owners, Operators and Inspectors of in-scope equipment should ensure they have adequate insurance to cover their activities.

Premises owners and Users shall use their gases and look after their gas cylinders and associated equipment in a safe and responsible way.

For specific advice from the *British Compressed Gases Association* (BCGA), refer to:

- BCGA Code of Practice (CP) 7 <sup>[7]</sup>, *The safe use of oxy-fuel gas equipment (individual portable or mobile cylinder supply)*.
- BCGA CP 47 <sup>[9]</sup>, *The safe use of individual portable or mobile cylinder gas supply equipment*.

This Guidance Note is intended for use in conjunction with current guidance and information produced by the *Health and Safety Executive* (HSE) and other related bodies and trade associations.

### 2. SCOPE

The requirements for thorough inspection for gas supply mobile pressure equipment and the activities of an Independent Safety Inspector.

### 3. COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

The *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act* <sup>[1]</sup> and the *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations* <sup>[3]</sup> require that work equipment is:

- suitable for the purpose for which it is provided;
- installed correctly;
- safe to operate, and operated safely;
- maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair to ensure that health and safety conditions are maintained and that any deterioration is detected and remedied in good time.

Where acetylene is present in the workplace, *The Acetylene Safety (England and Wales and Scotland) Regulations* <sup>[5]</sup> apply.

Gas pressure equipment operating above 0.5 bar is subject to the *Pressure Systems Safety Regulations (PSSR)* <sup>[4]</sup>. The intention of the PSSR <sup>[4]</sup> is to prevent serious injury from the hazard of stored energy, as a result of the failure of a pressure system or its component parts. PSSR <sup>[4]</sup> requires pressure systems to undergo a thorough examination in accordance with a Written Scheme of Examination, unless a specific exclusion applies.

HSE guidance is that the Employer / Owner's in consultation with a competent person, shall decide if a Written Scheme of Examination is required. HSE publish an example of a portable oxy-fuel gas welding set which is stated as unlikely to require a written scheme of examination (HSE L122 <sup>[6]</sup>, *Safety of pressure systems. Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000. Approved Code of Practice and guidance*, Clause 113). However, it is emphasised that such equipment will still require inspection and maintenance to comply with the *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations* <sup>[3]</sup>. The need for a Written Scheme of Examination shall be formally assessed by the Employer / Owner in accordance with PSSR <sup>[4]</sup>, Regulation 8.

Where a Written Scheme of Examination is implemented for the mobile equipment, written records shall be maintained by the Employer / Owner covering the Scheme itself and the records of examinations carried out by the Competent Person under the Scheme. For information on PSSR <sup>[4]</sup> and Written Schemes of Examination, refer to BCGA CP 39 <sup>[8]</sup>. *In-service requirements of pressure equipment (gas storage and gas distribution systems)*.

To comply with legislation, gas supply mobile pressure equipment shall be subject to regular inspection and maintenance.

BCGA recommends that the thorough inspection is undertaken by an Independent Safety Inspector. For detailed information on gas supply mobile pressure equipment, the Independent Safety Inspector shall be familiar with:

- BCGA CP 7 <sup>[7]</sup>, *The safe use of oxy-fuel gas equipment (individual portable or mobile cylinder supply)*.
- BCGA CP 47 <sup>[9]</sup>, *The safe use of individual portable or mobile cylinder gas supply equipment*.

These documents require that, as well as the initial selection, review of suitability, routine assembly, before and after use inspection checks carried out by the user, a thorough inspection and associated periodic maintenance is required.

All inspection and maintenance should be carried out at suitable intervals, with a thorough inspection carried out, typically, at least annually, conducted by a competent Independent Safety Inspector.

All inspections and maintenance shall be documented and records kept. The Employer / Owner shall be able to demonstrate that regular inspection and maintenance has been carried out. Where there is ambiguity on who has responsibility for keeping these records, for example, where different parties exist (such as Premises Owner, Equipment Owner, Operator, Employer, Self-employed, etc.) then all parties shall agree where the responsibility lies, and shall not commence operations until this agreement is reached and is set down in writing.

The use of gas supply mobile pressure equipment, including its inspection and maintenance arrangements, should be included within the Quality Management System of:

- the party responsible for the in-service integrity of the equipment, for example, Owner, Operator, Employer, etc.;
- the Independent Safety Inspector.

#### **4. PRE-INSPECTION. FAMILIARITY WITH GASES AND EQUIPMENT**

The Independent Safety Inspector shall have an awareness of the properties of the gas(es), including mixtures, that may be encountered, for example, those used within the gas supply mobile pressure equipment as well as any other gas(es) that may be encountered during the inspection and maintenance check.

Each gas may have its own distinctive properties.

All gases, their containers and associated equipment have their hazards, appropriate controls, identified by risk assessment, shall be adopted and maintained. This includes those controls necessary to protect all persons who may be affected by the activity from hazards, such as an escape, leak or accumulation of gases into the workplace. All parties shall be familiar with BCGA Guidance Note (GN) 11 <sup>[10]</sup>, *The management of risk when using gases in enclosed workplaces*, before allowing work to commence. If additional (gas specific) information is required contact the gas supplier for advice.

Independent Safety Inspectors (and other relevant persons) shall be familiar with the operation and maintenance of the gas equipment to be inspected, insofar as this is relevant to the inspection. Where there is ambiguity over any aspect of operation or maintenance, advice may be sought from the equipment owner, operator and / or manufacturer.

#### **5. INSPECTION**

The inspection shall be carried out by a competent Independent Safety Inspector. For the competence requirements for an Independent Safety Inspector, refer to Section 5.1.



If the Independent Safety Inspector is not truly objective and independent, the inspection is valueless.

Where a 3<sup>rd</sup> party Inspector is used, their independence and objectivity is usually readily demonstrable, however, confirmation of these requirements should be included, for example, in the scope of work, in the contract, in purchase order conditions, etc.

Where an in-house Inspector carries out the activity, then the Inspector should not be involved in the day-to-day management of the equipment to be inspected. A clear case shall exist to demonstrate independence of in-house inspectors, for example, though:

- an externally audited Quality Assurance arrangement;
- a suitable written authorisation;
- belonging to an independent team, with independent managers;
- through personal membership of an appropriate professional body, etc.

The inspection shall take place in a designated, safe location, for example, which has adequate ventilation, lighting and is suitable for the safe testing of the gas equipment, etc., as confirmed by the Independent Safety Inspector. Where practical, it should be away from other work activities and hazardous substances. Before the inspection takes place, the Independent Safety Inspector should arrange with the Employer / Owner for the equipment to be made safe, for example, taken out of service and placed in the inspection location.

The process of carrying out the inspection shall be subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. Appropriate controls shall be identified and implemented. Controls may include additional ventilation, cooling, following a safe system of work, induction, instruction, limiting other nearby activities, requirements for personal protective equipment (PPE), demarcation of the inspection location and suitable (temporary) warning signs and notices. Warning signs shall comply with *The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals Regulations* <sup>[2]</sup>.

The Employer / Owner shall conduct the risk assessment. The Independent Safety Inspector shall review the risk assessment for suitability, prior to commencing work.

The Independent Safety Inspector shall comply with any requirements for health and safety, including hazard controls, permits, PPE standards, etc., required by the Employer / Owner.

For details of the suggested inspection activities refer to Section 5.2.

The inspection shall determine if the gas supply mobile pressure equipment has been correctly set-up, it is working efficiently and is safe for (continued) use. On completion of the inspection, the Independent Safety Inspector shall provide a written report to the Employer / Owner of the equipment in line with Section 5.3. The Employer / Owner remains responsible for ensuring that all equipment in use is in a safe condition.



**Figure 1:** Example of a warning sign

Written records of all inspection and maintenance activities shall be retained by the Employer / Owner, refer to Section 5.4.

### **5.1 Competence requirements**

All persons shall have the necessary competence (including skills and knowledge) to carry out their job safely. They shall receive appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision. This should include induction and refresher sessions, as required. It is the duty of the Employer to ensure their persons are competent. It is recommended that a training programme with a competency assessment is carried out under a formalised system. Records shall be kept of the information, instruction, training and supervision provided and of the competence level achieved.

The Independent Safety Inspector shall be experienced in the use of gas supply mobile pressure equipment. The Independent Safety Inspector should have undertaken and successfully completed a specialist training course for the inspection of gas supply mobile pressure equipment. The Independent Safety Inspector shall maintain currency of competence via suitable and monitored continuous professional development (CPD), ensuring an ability to perform each inspection task safely and correctly.

The required qualities of an Independent Safety Inspector shall include:

- (i) an awareness of the properties and characteristics of each of the gases used, refer to Section 4;
- (ii) a theoretical and practical knowledge of the functioning of the equipment, the potential defects and hazards which may occur, and an understanding of the overall integrity and safety of the equipment;
- (iii) an adequate knowledge of relevant current legislation, standards and industry best practice information, for example, that set out in Section 3;
- (iv) the skills to carry out inspection of the equipment to the required standard;
- (v) sufficient knowledge of health and safety management techniques to complete all necessary tasks safely;
- (vi) the ability to complete the necessary documentation and present the findings to the Employer / Owner and, where required, to the User.

It is desirable that the Independent Safety Inspector is a member of a Professional body related to the industrial compressed gases industry, such as the BCGA and / or registered through an Engineering Council recognised Professional Institution (for example, *The Institution of Mechanical Engineers* (IMechE), *The Institution of Engineering and Technology* (IET), *The Welding Institute* (TWI), etc.).

BCGA provides guidance on the minimum knowledge required for the safe interaction of personnel with industrial, food and medical gases, including information on the competency of personnel, within BCGA GN 23 <sup>[11]</sup>, *Gas safety. Information, instruction and training*.

### **5.2 Inspection process**

Before commencing an inspection, the Independent Safety Inspector shall be familiar with the relevant aspects of BCGA CP 7 <sup>[7]</sup> and BCGA CP 47 <sup>[9]</sup>, as well as the relevant standards for the individual components.

The inspection shall take into account any relevant manufacturers' / suppliers' recommendations.

The Independent Safety Inspector should follow a suitable and pre-determined checklist during the inspection. Examples of suggested individual component checklists are displayed in Appendix 1.

The Independent Safety Inspector should check that:

- all gas cylinders (on the gas supply mobile pressure equipment) are safe for continued use, secured in their stowage and have no signs of misuse (for example, damaged by arc strikes or impacts, valve outlet threads crossed, etc.). If required, that spindle keys are attached to each cylinder valve;

NOTE: If the Independent Safety Inspector has any queries over the inspection, maintenance or serviceability of a gas cylinder or its permanently fitted valve and accessories, then they should advise the Employer / Owner to contact the owner of the cylinder for advice.

- appropriate equipment is in use, suitable for each gas. All components are suitably compatible;
- for oxy-fuel applications, the equipment (including suitable safety devices) is assembled in a way which will not result in a mix of gases in the cutting nozzle, blowpipe or hose. Such a mix has the potential to result in a back-fire or flashback;
- the manufacturer's date of expiry for each component is determined. Where the date cannot be identified from the component, then, for example, seek advice from the manufacturer or equipment supplier, check purchasing records, etc. Only in-date components shall be in use. Where a component has exceeded its life period, it shall be identified as being 'unserviceable';

NOTE: BCGA TIS 18 <sup>[12]</sup>, *Date marking of gas accessories*, provides information on date marking of components by some BCGA member companies.

- there is no external damage or signs of tampering with the gas supply mobile pressure equipment which would make it unsafe. Identify and record any inadequate or dangerous modifications and repairs;
- there are no signs of contamination, noting that some types of contamination may react with the gas or lead to inefficient operation, for example, on the parts of the equipment which are in contact with the gas;
- as far as practical, internal components operate correctly. Check there is no internal malfunction of the equipment;
- equipment is suitable for the pressures and flow rates required;
- all joints and connections are correctly assembled and are fit for purpose, including nozzle seating;

- joints, connections and components which incorporate a vent hole do not release gas (for example, non-return and pressure operated cut-off valves, check they operate correctly and prevent the backflow of gas).

The Independent Safety Inspector should use a safe procedure to:

- leak test each component during assembly, and to leak test the whole system once assembled;

NOTE: The *European Industrial Gases Association (EIGA)* provide useful guidance on the use of leak detection fluids with gas cylinders, refer to EIGA 78 <sup>[13]</sup>, *Leak detection fluids use with gas cylinder packages*.

- purge the equipment, taking into account the length of flexible hoses (which indicates the volume of gas requiring displacement through purging);

The Independent Safety Inspector should operate the equipment to ensure it is functioning safely and correctly, in line with the task risk assessment. For example, on oxy-fuel gas equipment, carry out a light up and shut down check, in line with the appropriate authorisations and safety controls.

### **5.3 Post inspection - Independent Safety Inspector**

Upon completion of the inspection, the Independent Safety Inspector shall:

- if required by the Employer / Owner, provide localised tagging, labelling etc., which should be attached to the equipment to confirm the inspection has been carried out, its state of serviceability and the date that the inspection was carried out. If an item is assessed as unsafe for further use, the Independent Safety Inspector shall clearly identify the item as 'unsafe';
- provide a written report (which may be in an electronic format) on the inspection to the Employer / Owner of the equipment. The report shall:
  - identify the individual assets which have been inspected;
  - detail any required corrective actions;
  - detail any components which may become 'life expired' before the next inspection is due;
  - state if the equipment is safe and serviceable (or otherwise) for continued use;
  - recommend a date when the next thorough inspection is required;
  - if requested, include a Certificate of Inspection (refer to Appendix 2).

NOTE: A thorough inspection should be carried out at suitable intervals and typically at least annually, as described in Section 3. The actual timescale will be dependent on many factors and the Independent Safety Inspector should take these into account before recommending a suitable interval for the next thorough inspection. It remains the Employer / Owners responsibility to set a date and arrange for any future thorough inspections.

## 5.4 Post inspection – Employer / Owner

Upon completion of the inspection, the Employer / Owner shall:

- confirm receipt of the Independent Safety Inspector's report, for example, this could be by co-signing the report;
- update the inspection and maintenance records for the equipment. A record shall be kept until at least the next inspection is carried out, and ideally for the service lifetime of the equipment;
- take action to immediately remove from service and subsequently to quarantine, destroy, replace or carry out corrective maintenance on, items identified as unserviceable;
- resolve the required corrective actions made by the Independent Safety Inspector, taking any actions required in the immediate interests of health and safety in the meantime.

## 6. REFERENCES

Document Number	Title
1.	The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
2. SI 1996: No. 341	The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals Regulations 1996.
3. SI 1998: No. 2306	Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER).
4. SI 2000: No. 128	The Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000.
5. SI 2014: No.1639	The Acetylene Safety (England and Wales and Scotland) Regulations 2014.
6. HSE L122	Safety of pressure systems. Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000. Approved Code of Practice and guidance.
7. BCGA Code of Practice 7	The safe use of oxy-fuel gas equipment (individual portable or mobile cylinder supply).
8. BCGA Code of Practice 39	In-service requirements of pressure equipment (gas storage and gas distribution systems).
9. BCGA Code of Practice 47	The safe use of individual portable or mobile cylinder gas supply equipment.
10. BCGA Guidance Note 11	The management of risk when using gases in enclosed workspaces.
11. BCGA Guidance Note 23	Gas safety. Information, instruction and training.

12. BCGA TIS 18            Date marking of gas accessories.
13. EIGA 78                Leak detection fluids use with gas cylinder packages.

Further information can be obtained from:

UK Legislation	<a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk">www.legislation.gov.uk</a>
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	<a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk">www.hse.gov.uk</a>
British Compressed Gases Association (BCGA)	<a href="http://www.bcga.co.uk">www.bcga.co.uk</a>
European Industrial Gases Association (EIGA)	<a href="http://www.eiga.eu">www.eiga.eu</a>
The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE)	<a href="http://www.imeche.org">www.imeche.org</a>
The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)	<a href="http://www.theiet.org">www.theiet.org</a>
The Welding Institute (TWI)	<a href="http://www.theweldinginstitute.com">www.theweldinginstitute.com</a>

## COMPONENT CHECKLISTS

TABLE A1-1: Regulators

Item		Inert		Oxidiser		Flammable		Comments
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1.	Compliant with applicable relevant standards.							
2.	Clean and no contamination.							
3.	Undamaged.							
4.	Suitably identified.							For example, refer to BCGA CP 7 <sup>[7]</sup> , Section 7.1 or BCGA CP 47 <sup>[9]</sup> , Section 6.1.
5.	In date, refer to BCGA TIS 18 <sup>[12]</sup> .							If only a short life remains, record in the report.
6.	Fitted in correct orientation.							Side entry or top entry
7.	Inlet connection, compatible with cylinder valve outlet and serviceable.							
8.	Outlet connection serviceable.							
9.	Proportional pressure relief valve (where fitted externally). Present, not contaminated.							
10.	Gauges - cylinder contents & outlet. Functioning, suitable, undamaged and indicating a steady pressure.							
11.	Pressure adjusting screw rotates freely and stays on when fully unscrewed (anti-clockwise).							
12.	Leak check on regulator (with a suitable solution, for examples refer to EIGA 78 <sup>[13]</sup> ).							

**TABLE A1-2: Safety devices**

Item		Inert		Oxidiser		Flammable		Comments
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1.	Compliant with applicable relevant standards.							
2.	Undamaged.							
3.	Clean and no contamination.							
4.	Suitable for specific gas service.							
5.	Fitted in correct direction of gas flow.							
6.	Fitted to each gas regulator.							
7.	Within life, BCGA TIS 18 <sup>[12]</sup> .							If only a short life remains, record in the report.
8.	Check for correct built in functions.							
9.	Components used to be of the same operational type, for example, both resettable or both single use.							
10.	Reset device operational. It has not been restricted, modified or damaged.							
11.	Check correct operation: Reverse flow trip before 1.2 bar (17.5 psi).							
12.	Leak check (with a suitable solution, for examples refer to EIGA 78 <sup>[13]</sup> ).							



**TABLE A1-3: Hoses**

Item		Inert		Oxidiser		Flammable		Comments
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1.	Compliant with applicable relevant standards. To include individual components and the assembly.							
2.	Compatible with the gas service.							
3.	Correct colour for gas service.							
4.	Of the correct nominal bore for the maximum flow of gas required.							
5.	Undamaged (including stress fractures).							
6.	Clean, no contamination.							
7.	Connection nuts serviceable.							
8.	Connections secured with appropriate clips.							No worm drives!
9.	If joined together, the use of hose clips (plastic or metal) specifically designed for that purpose.							No tape.
10.	Hose check valves (non-return valve) fitted (at blowpipe).							
11.	Carry out a reverse flow test to check operation of hose check valve.							
12.	Leak check (with a suitable solution, for examples, refer to EIGA 78 <sup>[13]</sup> ).							

**TABLE A1-4: Blowpipes**

Item		Inert		Oxidiser		Flammable		Comments
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1.	Compliant with applicable relevant standards.							
2.	Compatible with the gas service(s).							
3.	Undamaged. Threads and connections serviceable.							
4.	Clean and no contamination.							
5.	Valves intact and secure.							
6.	Valves turn easily and close off without excessive force.							
7.	Lever firmly hinged.							
8.	Nozzle nut in good condition.							
9.	Nozzle of correct size and type for the application.							
10.	Nozzle and blowpipe head are compatible.							

**TEMPLATE FOR AN INSPECTION CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the following gas supply mobile pressure equipment has been inspected in accordance with the relevant requirements of BCGA CP 7 <sup>[7]</sup>, CP 47 <sup>[9]</sup> and GN 44.

Equipment:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Inspection conclusions (for example, corrective actions, etc.):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*Delete as appropriate:*

1. The equipment is safe for continued use.
2. The equipment is not safe for continued use until the required corrective actions, including subsequent satisfactory inspection and testing, are completed.
3. The equipment is not safe for continued use.

Inspection carried out by: ..... (Signature)

..... (Print Name)

Employed by: ..... (Company Name)

Date of inspection: .....

(Recommended) Date of next inspection: .....



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