

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued advice on how to deal with the current Covid 19 virus pandemic (<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>).

LPG cylinders are circulating between LPG filling plants and consumers during the current pandemic, potentially exposing personnel (including consumers), throughout the distribution channel, to infection.

The virus spreads mainly between people in close contact with one another via inhalation of respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

It can also be transmitted by direct contact by touching a contaminated surface or object, but that it is not considered a main pathway of transmission.

The nature of the LPG cylinder business presents challenges because of the risk of the virus remaining on contaminated LPG cylinders (particularly on handles) during their distribution.

The following advice is presented as a guide to protecting personnel (and consumers) throughout the LPG cylinder distribution channel.

It will also be incorporated in updates to the WLPGA Guides for Good Industry Practices for LPG Cylinder Filling (<https://www.wlpga.org/publication/guide-good-industry-practices-lpg-cylinder-filling/>) and LPG Cylinders in the Distribution Channel (<https://www.wlpga.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2019-Guide-to-Good-Industry-Practices-for-LPG-Cylinders-in-the-Distribution-Channel.pdf>).

As with all the information published in the WLPGA Guides, they are not intended to replace other company information that may have been issued on the subject.

The first part of this advisory notice is for filling plant operatives and focuses on personal hygiene and cleaning cylinders, preferably before they enter the plant. The second part is more general guidance notes for all personnel who work in the distribution channel, including those in the filling plant.

Specific advice for filling plant operatives

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or regularly clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth to avoid transmission via direct contact
- Practice good respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth and nose, with your bent elbow or tissue, when you cough or sneeze
- Avoid close contact with others by maintaining at least two metres distance. Do not shake hands or hug
- If you have a fever, cough or difficulty breathing, seek medical advice immediately
- Monitor the body surface temperature of everyone before entering the workplace
- Wash and disinfect cylinders (especially the handles), preferably before they enter the filling plant

- This is especially important for plants without inline cylinder washing equipment. Washing or disinfecting can be done using a sprayer, plunge bath [e.g. garbage bin] or antiseptic wipes, in an isolated area, inside the filling plant, or on the unloading platform with additional precautions. Personnel involved in the handling, spraying or wiping of untreated cylinders, should wear appropriate PPE – face shield, protective gowns or coveralls and gloves. Proprietary solutions, or bleach mixed in the right concentration with water, should be used to ensure the virus is killed. The following note on the use of bleach issued by the Hong Kong government is a useful reference - <https://www.info.gov.hk/info/sars/en/useofbleach.htm>
- For plants with inline washing equipment, make sure that the solution temperature, and soap content, are in line with the manufacturers' recommendation
- Where washing or disinfecting the cylinders is not practical, it is important to ensure personnel follow the plant procedures and wear the correct gloves whenever handling cylinders
- Restrict the number of personnel on the loading/unloading platform, and trucks, and ensure everyone loading/unloading cylinders maintain at least two-metre distance between them
- Wash down truck unloading area before and after cylinder deliveries
- Ensure the use of (disposable) coveralls, (antistatic) gloves and protective glasses when in the plant. Disinfect all PPE that will be reused the next day
- Restrict the number of people sharing common facilities (changing rooms, kitchens, smoking rooms, waiting rooms, etc.)

General guidance notes for distribution channel personnel

- Drivers and delivery personnel should carry respirators – equivalent to N95, FFP2 or FFP3 – and alcohol-based hand sanitizers with them in the vehicle to use when necessary
- Keep two-meter distance from each other. Respirators should be used if distancing is not possible because of the nature of the work
- If possible, delivery personnel should disinfect customers' returned cylinders by wiping the handle before bringing the cylinders back to the work base
- Clean and disinfect personnel transporters (e.g. buses) and cabins of vehicles used for transporting cylinders, before and after journeys
- Maintain a clean work environment and sanitize regularly often with cleaning agents where necessary