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Dear All,

Welcome to our Client Update for Summer 2004.

Firstly, the news report below was reported on the [scotsman.com](http://scotsman.com) website:

'Factory 'Gas' Death Victims Named'

By Matthew Cooper, PA News

Two men who died after apparently inhaling a lethal gas while attempting to repair a cooling fan were named by police tonight.

West Mercia Police said Stuart Jordan, 50 and Richard Clarkson, 29, were pronounced dead in hospital on Monday after being found collapsed in a pit at a Hereford factory.

The head of Bodycote International, which owns the plant, said staff were distraught at the death of Mr Jordan, from Boshipstone, and Mr Clarkson, from Madley, both Herefordshire.

John Hubbard, the firm's chief executive, said: "We are devastated by the loss of our two colleagues.

"We don't yet know the exact details of what happened yesterday, but we are working with the police and the relevant authorities and have launched our own internal inquiries.

"Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with the friends and families of those involved."

Post-mortem examinations are expected to be carried out and an inquest is likely to be opened and adjourned later this week.

Ambulance crews were called to Bodycote HIP Limited in College Road at around 1pm on Monday.

Safety experts believe the pit at the metal treatment site may have contained argon gas, which can prove fatal if inhaled.

Based on this report, it would appear that we can add two more names to the list who have been killed by oxygen deficiency.

Inert gases like argon have proved to be deadly on many occasions as they have no warning smell, taste or colour.

Whilst nitrogen may well have the worst track-record of all (as it is more widely used), argon can be even more hazardous as a result of it being ~1.5 times heavier than air. This may account for the 'pit', mentioned in the report, containing argon gas.

It is well documented that entry in areas where the atmosphere contains less than 8% oxygen by volume (cf 21.0%) will lead to fainting/collapse in a few minutes. If the oxygen content were 6% or less then collapse would be almost instant and death or severe brain damage would be the likely outcome. Especially before entry into 'confined spaces', the atmosphere should be tested to ensure that it is safe. According to EH40, the minimum level of oxygen to which people may be exposed is 19%. At oxygen concentrations of less than 19% access should be prohibited.

Hopefully, this tragedy will (once again) highlight the danger of oxygen deficiency and, by raising awareness, prevent similar accidents elsewhere.

## PRODUCT NEWS

We have been able to maintain very competitive prices on our cylinder gas regulators for some time now. However, price volatility in the steel market (caused by huge demand in China) has lead us to review pricing on our cylinder trolleys and cylinder wall brackets. The best advice that we can give you at the moment is to check or confirm prices on these items prior to placing your order.

Details of our new 'Smart- Hose' may be found on the website by clicking in 'new products'. This revolutionary product controls the danger of high pressure hose failure at source. If the hose should burst it will automatically isolate the high pressure supply (e.g. from the cylinder) and prevent back-flow from the system downstream.

If, at any stage, you are unsure about any aspect of gas safety - please ask.  
You can contact us for safety information,  
cylinder and cryogenic safety training,  
product supply and testing services,  
gas cylinder manifold & pipeline installation  
on the numbers given below:

**GAS SAFETY UK - PROVIDING INDEPENDENT & COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS FOR USERS OF COMPRESSED (CYLINDER) GASES AND CRYOGENIC LIQUID GASES.**

Best regards, David Bayliss

(Technical Manager, Gas Safety UK; Safety & Training Engineer; Partner I.G.S.)

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