

Safety Advisory Notice: Pierceable Gas Cartridges

Scout Insurance Services Ltd monitors every accident notification made under Association rules. One of the reasons for this is to identify patterns or trends in order to inform and advise the Movement.

Over the last few years, there have been a number of serious incidents involving the use of gas cookers and lanterns which employ pierceable cartridges.

Equipment of this type often referred to as 'Bluet' were amongst the earliest examples of personal, lightweight cookers and lanterns. As such, much of this equipment held by Groups may be over thirty years old.

Over the last ten years or so, the old pierceable cartridge has been superseded by lightweight aluminium cartridges which incorporate a screw or clip valve fitting. These can be fitted and removed repeatedly, with a minimal risk of the escape of gas.

The old type of cartridge was, as its name suggests, pierced by a spike in the appliance. Once pierced, the canister could not safely be removed until empty.

The main risks with this older type equipment, are age, lack of familiarity and misuse. Examples are:-

- extracting a 'spent' cartridge and attempting to 'screw' in a replacement without removing the burner assembly.
- Screwing in a burner assembly 'cross threaded' which pierces the cartridge without being able to screw right down to form a seal.
- Equipment which is old and in which the rubber seal has become damaged or perished, preventing a good, gas tight, seal.

In all these cases, leaking gas can be the result and, due the lack of a valve, the leak cannot be stopped.

The results, in a number of Scout cases, have been serious burn injuries to users and those nearby. In France, as a direct result of repeated serious injuries, attempts are being made to prohibit the manufacture of pierceable cartridges.

For these reasons, The Scout Association is taking the unusual step in strongly advising Groups to cease using equipment which employs pierceable cartridges.

It is appreciated that such advice will require Groups to replace older equipment and that this has cost implications. However, the evidence of risk is overwhelming.

It is accepted that equipment cannot be replaced overnight and that some of this type may have to be used in the short term. Where this cannot be avoided, Leaders are advised to check, carefully, to ensure that seals are in good condition and should record the inspection. In addition, use of such equipment should be closely supervised and, above all, **cartridge changes and assembly should only be undertaken by adults, in the open and away from sources of ignition.**



All cooking and lighting equipment utilising flammable gases or liquids are potentially dangerous but, with care, can be used safely. However, pierceable cartridge equipment has been shown to present unique hazards, not only within Scouting but within the general public as well.

Groups are recommended to cease using such equipment and to implement a policy of replacement within twelve months at the latest. Scout Shops Ltd have a range of newer, low cost alternatives, available at highly competitive rates.



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