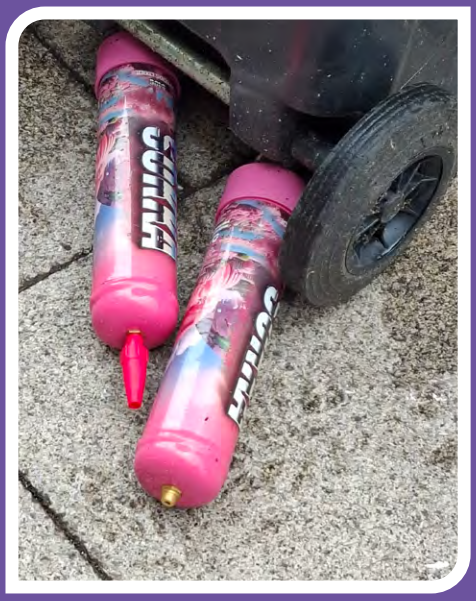






SAFE HANDLING AND TRANSPORT OF DISCARDED NITROUS OXIDE CANISTERS (N_2O)

- Guidance for street cleansing, parks, waste services, road maintenance staff, litter /community wardens.

- **Discarded nitrous oxide "laughing gas" canisters found in public areas are hazardous waste and must be managed with care.**

IMPROVED GUIDANCE FOR SAFE HANDLING & TEMPORARY STORAGE

For more information check **mywaste.ie**

Ireland's guide to waste
mywaste

REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANNING OFFICES

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

SAFE HANDLING AND TRANSPORT OF DISCARDED NITROUS OXIDE CANISTERS (N_2O)

When You Find N_2O Canisters...

	DO:	DON'T:
1	**Segregate from other waste. Keep N_2O canisters separate from any flammable or general waste materials. (They must be handled as hazardous waste only, code 16 05 04*).**	**Never put N_2O canisters in any regular litter bin, recycling bin or compactor**. Mixing hazardous canisters with other waste is dangerous.
2	Assume every canister is full – handle gently, contents under pressure.	**Don't treat it as empty containers – never** assume it's harmless or empty.
3	**Wear gloves and eye protection (safety glasses/goggles) before touching any cannister**	**Don't handle with bare hands**, especially if it's cold or covered in residue – leaking N_2O can cause frostbite on skin.
4	**Keep away from heat or flames – move any found canister out of direct sunlight, away from cigarettes, fires, or sparks.**	**Don't smoke or allow any ignition sources** near the canister. **Never** puncture, crush, or burn it – it could explode.
5	**Keep the canister upright (valve end up) if possible. Carry it upright and do not drop it. Place upright it in a sturdy container (e.g. a crate or bin) to prevent rolling.**	**Don't toss canisters loosely** into bags or bins where they can roll around or get mixed with other waste. This could lead to accidental crushing or mixing with flammables.
6	**Store upright it short-term in a secure, cool, ventilated place away from the public. Use a designated hazardous waste container or an outdoor caged area if available. Clearly label the storage as "Hazardous – Pressurised Gas."**	**Don't store canisters for extended periods.** Arrange prompt collection once you have a sufficient quantity for a combined or contracted collection.
7	Damaged or leaking cannisters stay 10M away until hissing has stopped then follow steps from 1 above	Never lift a leaking cannister

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SAFE HANDLING AND TRANSPORT OF DISCARDED NITROUS OXIDE CANISTERS (N_2O)

1. Regulatory Status

Discarded nitrous oxide canisters are classified as hazardous waste due to being pressurised containers and **must not be placed** in general waste or recycling streams.

2. Hazards

Risks include explosion, fire intensification (oxidising gas), frostbite injury from rapid gas release and injury during compaction or crushing. Exposure to a gas in an enclosed space may can cause drowsiness or dizziness.

3. Safe On-Site Handling

Treat all canisters as potentially full. Wear **suitable** gloves and eye protection. Do not puncture, crush, heat or compact **or place in general waste**. Keep away from ignition sources. Consult your own Health and Safety advisor if in any doubt.

4. Minimum Transport under ADR (Small Load Exemption) collection from public areas

Nitrous oxide (UN 1070) is assigned to Transport Category 3. Where the total quantity carried does not exceed 1,000 ADR points, the small load exemption under ADR 1.1.3.6 may apply. **Canisters must be transported upright back to the depot. Secure them to prevent tipping or rolling during transit.**

Must not be loaded and transported in a closed vehicle or vehicle container.

5. Transport (ADR) collection by Haz waste collector

Nitrous oxide is classified as UN 1070, Class 2 with subsidiary oxidising hazard (5.1). ADR requirements apply. Transport should normally be undertaken by licensed hazardous waste contractors. Ensure each container is properly labelled once full.

The exemption applies only to packaged goods and does not apply to bulk or tank carriage. Limited Quantity and Excepted Quantity provisions do not apply. Cylinders must be UN-approved pressure receptacles, correctly closed, labelled with hazard labels 2.2 and 5.1, and the UN number. The load must be secured and transport documentation must identify UN 1070, Nitrous Oxide, Class 2 (5.1).

While some ADR requirements such as vehicle placarding, orange plates and full ADR driver certification may be relaxed under this exemption, local authorities are strongly advised to use licensed hazardous waste contractors unless specialist ADR competence exists internally.

6. Temporary Storage

Store **upright** temporarily in a **designated**, secure, ventilated, cool area, away from public access and flammable materials. Clearly label as hazardous pressurised gas waste.

7. Disposal

Disposal must be via licensed hazardous waste contractors using approved treatment methods such as controlled gas destruction or depressurisation with metal recovery.

8. Escalation and Incident Response:

Immediately **escalate** if there is:

Any Doubt or Safety Concern: If you feel unsure about handling a canister (e.g. unfamiliar size or substance, strong odour, located in a hazardous spot like a poorly ventilated room), stop and escalate. Your safety is the priority. Get guidance from your Health & Safety Officer or manager before proceeding.