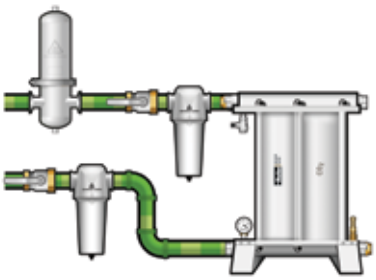
PCO_2 - Quality Incident Protection

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)



ENGINEERING YOUR SUCCESS.

PCO_2 - Quality Incident Protection Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

What is a PCO_2?

The PCO_2 is a static adsorption bed constructed from specially selected adsorbents to remove trace contamination from CO_2. It is designed as a **quality incident protection device** (i.e. it will treat 'out-of-specification' CO_2 to return it back to specification (within the limits of the specification)).

The PCO_2 is not designed to constantly purify poor quality CO_2; i.e. not allowing the beverage producer to lower the incoming CO_2 specification.

Why do I need a PCO_2?

CO_2 is produced from a wide variety of processes with differing contaminants. Some of these remain in the gas after treatment at the gas recovery plant. There have been some publicised incidents where poor quality gas passed all the way through the supply chain and into the beverage. To prevent a repeat occurrence of these **quality incidents,** the bottlers are starting to fit in-line, on-site protection, in addition to tightening controls at the CO_2 suppliers.

What is a quality incident?

This is where a delivery of out-of-specification CO_2 has been made to the plant or where CO_2 has been contaminated on-site during the production process.

What is the specification for beverage CO_2?

ISBT (International Society of Beverage Technologists) & **EIGA** (European Industrial Gas Association) both have International recommended standards. In these standards, Potential Contaminants are named with a Critical PPM limit of acceptance.

Total Volatile Hydrocarbons (as Methane)

Total Aromatic Hydrocarbon

Acetaldehyde

Total Sulphur (excluding SO2, as S)

When is the 6th Stage Sterile Gas Filter Required?

A 6th Stage HIGHFLOW TETPOR II Sterile Gas filter should be installed at point of use when -

- **Source of CO_2 is unknown.**
- **CO_2 has been produced from a fermentation process.**
- **When live bacteria and other micro-organisms are known to exist.**

How much contamination will the PCO_2 protect against?

The PCO_2 purifier will treat CO_2 with up to **10 times** the ISBT / EIGA levels of the named contaminants for a specified quantity of processed CO_2 gas.

How do I know when we have had a quality incident?

Many plants will find this very hard to observe if they do not have a CO_2 analyser or gas inspection process on site. Most plants take the QA certificate from the gas supplier as their goods inwards inspection. To improve monitoring of gas quality, several plants are starting to purchase on-line CO_2 analysers in addition to purifiers.

What can I expect to see when plants have analysers fitted?

In the most cases, the gas will be clean and have very low levels on monitored contaminants. Under these conditions there will be very little difference between inlet and outlet concentrations. In the event of a contamination spike, the purifier will remove it.

Should I change my elements after a Quality Incident?

Yes, always.

Who needs a PCO_2?

All producers and bottlers of beverage products:-

- **Soft drinks**
- **Beer**
- **Carbonated water**

How does the PCO_2 work?

The three layered adsorbent bed adsorbs contamination as it flows through. The three materials preferentially adsorb differing contaminants thus providing effective protection against a wide spectrum of potential contaminants.

Can the cartridges be regenerated?

No, although some companies may claim to be able to recover adsorbents and regenerate them, we are trying to remove contaminants to parts per billion levels and any trace residues may inhibit future performance. Additionally, many industrial processes for regenerating adsorbents may actually add contamination to the PCO_2 cartridges.

Where should I install the PCO_2?

The purifier treats vapour phase CO_2, so it has to be installed downstream of the vaporiser (evaporator), with a maximum approach temperature of 40°C.

Some plants have installed the purifiers close to the carbonator, while others have chosen a central point close to the evaporator for complete site treatment. The Parker domnick hunter PCO_2 is suitable for either option.

The PCO_2 is also suitable for external installation.

Is the PCO_2 designed for gas or liquid CO_2?

Gaseous CO_2 only.

What happens if liquid CO_2 enters the PCO_2?

Liquid CO_2 (which can be as cold as –78°C) boils off rapidly on contact with the aluminium surfaces and then the vapour passes at great speed through the adsorbent bed. Condensation, even ice, may appear on the exterior surfaces of the PCO_2. The internal rubber seals and inlet filter may become damaged due to the intense cold.

Always service the purifier, replace cartridges, filters and seals immediately.

How should I size the PCO_2?

The plant operators need to identify their **peak** demand for CO_2 (typically the capacity of the evaporator). This is usually measured in lbs/hr or kgs/hr as all bulk CO_2 deliveries are ordered by mass. This is the figure to use when selecting a PCO_2 purifier unit.

Can I over-size the PCO_2 and extend the working life?

NO. The people asking this question usually have no on-site CO_2 contamination monitoring and want to reduce their running costs. The PCO_2 is an insurance against the occurrence of quality incidents and therefore has to be properly maintained in order to be effective. Additionally, the cost of an 8000 lb/hr service kit is twice that of the 4000 lb/hr kit offering no cost saving.

How do I change adsorbent cartridges?

Simple - remove the top manifold, exchange the pre-charged cartridges, and replace the top manifold. Full details can be found in the User Guide.

When do I change adsorbent cartridges?

Every 6 months, or after a **'quality incident'**, whichever comes first.

When do I change filter elements cartridges?

It is recommended that the Filter Elements are changed every **6 months**.

It is advised that the filter cartridges are changed during the same planned maintenance schedule that the adsorbent cartridges are replaced. Replacing the cartridges during the same period will reduce downtime and the amount of time that the PCO_2 system is exposed to atmosphere and potential contamination.

What is the shelf life of un-used replacement cartridges?

Currently 1 year in original packaging (a heavy gauge laminated plastic bag). A label indicates manufacturing date.

What filtration should I use?

HIGH FLOW TETPOR II sterile gas membrane filters should be used to ensure sterility of the gas and protect finished product quality. The HIGH FLOW TETPOR II is validated as a 0.2 micron sterilizing grade filter in liquids through ASTM F838-05 and 0.01 micron in gas through full retention to an aerosol challenge of MS2 phage. This ensures the filter will guarantee the sterility of your process in the worst-case scenario where the filter may be subjected to bulk liquid due to a process problem.

Is PCO_2 FDA approved?

Materials of construction have independent verifications to comply with FDA Code of Federal Regulations title 21 CFR.

What is the approval status of PCO_2?

All models of the PCO_2 system meet full CE approval including accreditation to the European Pressure Equipment Directive (PED). The USA does not require pressure vessel approvals.

Parker Worldwide

Europe, Middle East, Africa

AE – United Arab Emirates, Dubai
Tel: +971 4 8127100
parker.me@parker.com

AT – Austria, Wiener Neustadt
Tel: +43 (0)2622 23501-0
parker.austria@parker.com

AT – Eastern Europe, Wiener Neustadt
Tel: +43 (0)2622 23501 900
parker.easteurope@parker.com

AZ – Azerbaijan, Baku
Tel: +994 50 2233 458
parker.azerbaijan@parker.com

BE/LU – Belgium, Nivelles
Tel: +32 (0)67 280 900
parker.belgium@parker.com

BG – Bulgaria, Sofia
Tel: +359 2 980 1344
parker.bulgaria@parker.com

BY – Belarus, Minsk
Tel: +375 17 209 9399
parker.belarus@parker.com

CH – Switzerland, Etoy
Tel: +41 (0)21 821 87 00
parker.switzerland@parker.com

CZ – Czech Republic, Klecany
Tel: +420 284 083 111
parker.czechrepublic@parker.com

DE – Germany, Kaarst
Tel: +49 (0)2131 4016 0
parker.germany@parker.com

DK – Denmark, Ballerup
Tel: +45 43 56 04 00
parker.denmark@parker.com

ES – Spain, Madrid
Tel: +34 902 330 001
parker.spain@parker.com

FI – Finland, Vantaa
Tel: +358 (0)20 753 2500
parker.finland@parker.com

FR – France, Contamine s/Arve
Tel: +33 (0)4 50 25 80 25
parker.france@parker.com

GR – Greece, Athens
Tel: +30 210 933 6450
parker.greece@parker.com

HU – Hungary, Budaörs
Tel: +36 23 885 470
parker.hungary@parker.com

IE – Ireland, Dublin
Tel: +353 (0)1 466 6370
parker.ireland@parker.com

IT – Italy, Corsico (MI)
Tel: +39 02 45 19 21
parker.italy@parker.com

KZ – Kazakhstan, Almaty
Tel: +7 7273 561 000
parker.easteurope@parker.com

NL – The Netherlands, Oldenzaal
Tel: +31 (0)541 585 000
parker.nl@parker.com

NO – Norway, Asker
Tel: +47 66 75 34 00
parker.norway@parker.com

PL – Poland, Warsaw
Tel: +48 (0)22 573 24 00
parker.poland@parker.com

PT – Portugal, Leca da Palmeira
Tel: +351 22 999 7360
parker.portugal@parker.com

RO – Romania, Bucharest
Tel: +40 21 252 1382
parker.romania@parker.com

RU – Russia, Moscow
Tel: +7 495 645-2156
parker.russia@parker.com

SE – Sweden, Spånga
Tel: +46 (0)8 59 79 50 00
parker.sweden@parker.com

SK – Slovakia, Banská Bystrica
Tel: +421 484 162 252
parker.slovakia@parker.com

SL – Slovenia, Novo Mesto
Tel: +386 7 337 6650
parker.slovenia@parker.com

TR – Turkey, Istanbul
Tel: +90 216 4997081
parker.turkey@parker.com

UA – Ukraine, Kiev
Tel +380 44 494 2731
parker.ukraine@parker.com

UK – United Kingdom, Warwick
Tel: +44 (0)1926 317 878
parker.uk@parker.com

ZA – South Africa, Kempton Park
Tel: +27 (0)11 961 0700
parker.southafrica@parker.com

North America

CA – Canada, Milton, Ontario
Tel: +1 905 693 3000

US – USA, Cleveland
Tel: +1 216 896 3000

Asia Pacific

AU – Australia, Castle Hill
Tel: +61 (0)2-9634 7777

CN – China, Shanghai
Tel: +86 21 2899 5000

HK – Hong Kong
Tel: +852 2428 8008

IN – India, Mumbai
Tel: +91 22 6513 7081-85

JP – Japan, Tokyo
Tel: +81 (0)3 6408 3901

KR – South Korea, Seoul
Tel: +82 2 559 0400

MY – Malaysia, Shah Alam
Tel: +60 3 7849 0800

NZ – New Zealand, Mt Wellington
Tel: +64 9 574 1744

SG – Singapore
Tel: +65 6887 6300

TH – Thailand, Bangkok
Tel: +662 186 7000-99

TW – Taiwan, Taipei
Tel: +886 2 2298 8987

South America

AR – Argentina, Buenos Aires
Tel: +54 3327 44 4129

BR – Brazil, Sao Jose dos Campos
Tel: +55 800 727 5374

CL – Chile, Santiago
Tel: +56 2 623 1216

MX – Mexico, Toluca
Tel: +52 72 2275 4200

European Product Information Centre
Free phone: 00 800 27 27 5374
(from AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IL, IS, IT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RU, SE, SK, UK, ZA)

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Parker Hannifin Manufacturing Limited
domnick hunter Filtration and Separation Division
Dukesway, Team Valley Trading Estate
Gateshead, Tyne and Wear
England NE11 0PZ
Tel: +44 (0)191 402 9000
Fax: +44 (0)191 482 6296
www.parker.com/dhfns