



SAFETY ASSESSMENT  
FEDERATION

# Guidance

## In-service Inspection Procedures

Considerations for establishing the date of examination of safety valves which have been in Storage

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## Scope

This document provides guidance on establishing the date from which a safety valve examination may be scheduled where it has been subject to a period of storage since the date of manufacture/refurbishment.

While the document focuses on safety valves, it would be reasonable to apply similar principles to other protective devices and fittings associated with pressure systems.

## Background

The nature of some pressure systems may result in a situation where replacement safety valves, either new or refurbished, are subject to a period of storage before being fitted to an operational system.

This may occur where a system is subject to a short maintenance and examination window due to the user/owner setting out a requirement for a long period of system operation and/or availability. For example, process plants and vapour compression refrigeration systems.

In such cases, the user/owner may plan to exchange safety valves with stored spares to shorten the period when the system is offline.

Where this occurs, the competent person undertaking an examination would need to be satisfied that the condition of the safety valve, taking into account the period and condition of storage, has not resulted in any degradation or adversely affected the correct function on return to service.

The period until the next examination is based on the safety valves' condition and likely service condition. In circumstances where it is not possible to establish the condition of safety valves subject to a period of storage, the period until the next examination is often taken from the point of supply or refurbishment, not the point of fitting, resulting in a shorter period between examinations than initially expected by the user/owner.

In such cases, for the user/owner to obtain the full period between examinations as set out within a written scheme, a further examination of the stored replacement safety valve would be required at the time of examination of the associated item to which it provides protection.

## Guidance

Where the user/owner of a pressure system intends to store replacement safety valves, either new or refurbished, for a period before fitting them to an operational pressure system, the competent person should consider and review the following before determining the nature of the examination required and specifying the next date of examination.

-  Has the manufacturer/supplier stated the conditions under which the safety valve should be stored, and for how long before further refurbishment and/or testing is required?
-  Have suitable storage provisions<sup>1</sup> been put in place where the manufacturer/supplier does not state storage conditions?
-  Can the user/owner confirm that the storage requirements have been met and that the storage dates have been established?
-  Does the safety valve contain any parts that have a defined life?
-  Was the safety valve set at a set point, which is confirmed<sup>2</sup> and documented at the time of manufacture or refurbishment?
-  For refurbished safety valves, was the as-found condition confirmed and documented at the time of refurbishment?
-  The period of storage<sup>3</sup> has not exceeded that stated by the manufacturer/supplier or by a defined life part.

Provided that the considerations above can be suitably established, the competent person may choose to specify the date of the next examination from the date of fitting rather than the date of manufacture/refurbishment. In such cases, the examination report should record that the safety valve has been subject to a period of suitable storage and that the date of the next examination has been specified from the date of fitting, which should be recorded along with the date at which the storage period began to avoid any misunderstanding.

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<sup>1</sup> Suitable storage provisions—The safety valve should be stored so that no degradation will occur, which will affect its correct operation when returned to service.

<sup>2</sup> Confirmation of set point – The competent person may verify the set point of the safety valve at the time of an examination in place of or in addition to that completed at manufacture/refurbishment either by bench or in-service testing.

<sup>3</sup> Period of storage – Where this is not defined by the manufacturer/supplier or is limited by a defined life part, the period of storage should not exceed the earlier of the periodicity between examinations as set out within a written scheme or 5 years. After which further refurbishment/testing should be undertaken.