

From: "Ted Atkins" <[tedatkins@gmail.com](mailto:tedatkins@gmail.com)>  
To: <undisclosed-recipients:>  
Sent: Saturday, April 07, 2012 8:26 AM  
Subject: Kathmandu Oxygen Explosion

I have just had a long chat with Neil Greenwood of Summit Oxygen. He informs me that there was a similar incident last year which he feels was due to a seal. This only affects an older type of Summit regulator and there should only be a small number in circulation. Neil has asked me to help to remove these from circulation. I suspect that most equipment will now be at BC or en-route. I am happy to help to resolve any issues and advise when I get there. Summit have promised to replace these regs with new ones being shipped out from UK end of April. Asian Trekking will get them to me and I will take care of any exchange required. I hope this eases discomfort about this situation. Please contact me if you have doubts or would like advice. Meanwhile please take the extra precautions we advised: fit cylinder to reg with the gauge down, wear goggles, wear gloves.

Thanks,  
Ted

Ted Atkins  
Topout Oxygen Engineering Ltd

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To: "Ted Atkins" <[tedatkins@gmail.com](mailto:tedatkins@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Friday, April 06, 2012 8:26 AM  
Subject: MORE SERIOUS OXYGEN EXPLOSION IN KATHMANDU

Mingma Sherpa of Seven Summits earlier emailed the attached photos. While attaching a Summit regulator to a Poisk cylinder for the first time the regulator exploded.

Flames erupted and he ended up burnt. He persisted and disconnected the regulator and made the situation safe. He then asked to come and see me with the regulator. The metal case is burnt through in two points. This is different and potentially more serious than the previous accident as this was an ignition.

I quizzed Mingma extensively if it was at all possible that either item had come into contact with oil, grease or paraffin. He is adamant this could not be so. We have to trust his judgement, he is very experienced in this field.

I took advice from a Ph.D. engineering consultant who had this to say -

"I'm sure a specialist could get to the bottom of this but it might be expensive. If accidents like this happened in the UK the operation would be shut down, and the failed parts taken for analysis into the root cause. This might lead to batches being recalled if manufacturing or bottle-filling error was suspected. This has happened with medical O2 regulators in the rare cases they have failed".\*

\*  
\*

I have passed what I know to Summit Oxygen and await a response. Meanwhile please be careful. Mingma was not wearing gloves or any other safety equipment. This would have saved or reduced the burns to his hands. It could be said that he has been lucky! Until Summit get back with a definitive response please use your best judgement. I will keep you informed of any new developments as I have them.

Ted Atkins

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'Seek out life's problems for they are the gateway to opportunity'.  
[www.topout.co.uk](http://www.topout.co.uk). Call in Kathmandu 00977 9803149195  
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Use no oil or grease - return equipment after each season for service. See web site for user guide. 'Science is a tool in our hands, not an end in its own right'

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Ted Atkins: "I was injured testing a Poisk regulator"

"News travels fast of an accident and I would like to explain the facts as we know them today. I was injured testing a Poisk regulator in conjunction with a new Summit cylinder yesterday. I chose to use the new cylinder because it was a new introduction to climbers

and it is delivered as being higher pressure than the Poisk cylinders.

The regulator that failed was not an old style nor was it the newest style. As I fastened it onto the cylinder there was an explosion. I had pieces from the gauge embedded in my neck (I am grateful to Kaju from Asian Trekking for taking this out with a pair of pliers).

### 3 specific precautions

Neil Greenwood of Summit Oxygen has been on the phone to me and we are trying to determine exactly what went wrong. Meantime I have sold a number of these cylinders and feel obliged to inform all of a potential problem.

I recommend 3 specific precautions at this stage:

- Wear ski goggles when changing the regs
- Wear gloves
- Put the cylinder onto the regulator keeping the regulator in the same plane with the gauge pointing at the ground.

It could be that this was simply a 'one off' defective regulator, but I have fitted so many in my time and this is a first for me and the first I have heard of. I was VERY lucky to get away with the level of injury I received so until this situation is resolved PLEASE observe the precautions I have listed.

These precautions would actually be good practice in all cases involving regulator changes and I urge you to disseminate this information.

Ted Atkins,

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