

## **British Beer and Pub Association**

### **Container Management Background**

#### **Kegs and Casks**

Almost 50% of UK beer production is sold in kegs or casks which, when empty, are returned to the brewery for re-filling. The average life-span of a draught beer container is 15 years. Thus, the industry enjoys one of the most environmentally-friendly means of transporting beer to the consumer. Kegs and casks are returnable assets and form an integral part of the beer dispense system. A number of initiatives have been put in place to ensure containers (which may have been misappropriated) are recovered and returned to their owners. (See [www.kegwatch.co.uk](http://www.kegwatch.co.uk)).

Brewers have always made it clear that they always retain ownership of their beer kegs and casks. (In addition, a large number of containers are owned by a third-party logistics support company.) All containers are clearly identified with ownership details -conditions of trade place onus on the customer to ensure that empties are returned.

Many people have asked why the industry does not apply deposit charges to containers to ensure their return, but complex administrative procedures and cash flow difficulties for customers have precluded the introduction of deposits.

Legitimate disposal of kegs/casks is only organised through breweries and their authorised agents. Members of the Association follow an agreed industry policy for the disposal of containers.

#### **Beer Dispense Gas Cylinders**

Brewers and gas supply companies have grown increasingly concerned about the misappropriation of gas cylinders: these assets are illicitly refilled for sale back to the trade. This practice not only deprives owners from using their assets but it is highly dangerous. The gas used to fill cylinders may not be of good grade quality - some cylinders may even be filled with the wrong gas and pressure - all gas cylinders are required by law to undergo strict testing regimes. It is essential that gas for beer dispense is purchased only from reputable suppliers. The British Compressed Gases Association has published a guidance leaflet which contains invaluable information on the quality and safety of drinks dispense gas cylinders: "Drinks Dispense Gas Cylinders: Purchasing Guide to help ensure Quality and Safety."

#### **Keg Watch Limited**

Keg Watch is a non-profit making industry organisation committed to reducing container losses. It represents UK brewers, cider makers and the major suppliers of dispense gases to the industry.

Keg Watch pays rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the theft or unauthorised destruction of containers.

Keg Watch operates a confidential free phone line - for general queries or information call free phone 0808 100 1945.