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**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

## Safety compromised: Cooking gas cylinders refilled at auto LPG stations

TNN | Mar 19, 2019, 12:06 PM IST



CHENNAI: It's an explosion waiting to happen. Several automobile LPG-filling stations in Pattabiram and other western suburbs also refill commercial cooking gas cylinders in violation of all safety norms.

Recently, Pattabiram resident T Sadagopan sent a photograph of a gas station employee refilling a commercial cooking cylinder using crude, makeshift equipment to Indian Oil Corporation. The senior official to whom the photograph was sent said it was clear the gas cylinder had not been returned to the authorised dealer for years. Under the rules, every five years the cylinders get a fresh coat of paint. This cylinder has not seen a coat of paint for years, he said.

TN petroleum dealers association president K P Murali said the workers in the gas station were violating all safety norms. The rules say petrol/diesel/gas has to be filled only into a tank fitted in a vehicle.

Sadagopan said inquiries with a few autorickshaw drivers showed that such illegal filling of LPG was common in many gas stations, especially in the western suburbs.

Filling LPG in cylinders is an automated process, which is to be done with utmost care. The empty cylinders are fixed on a moving circular platform. Once the gas is filled and the lid locked, the cylinder is immersed in a tank filled with water to check for any leak. Once this is completed, it is sent to the dealer.

Indian Oil Corporation officials said the Pattabiram gas station was run by a Mumbai-based private company.

It's up to the Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organisation to crackdown on violations by private gas stations. IOC officials