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## Hey Mr. Green! What About Disposable Cylinders?

Mr Green mixes the sacred with the propane

Photo by Vladmax/iStock

By [Bob Schildgen](#) | Apr 9 2017

Hey Mr. Green,

**Regarding those recyclable and disposable propane cylinders, there's a lot of new information about them beyond what was in your recent article. What's up?**

*—Heidi in Sacramento*

[In a recent article](#), I mixed the sacred and the propane by pointing out that some 60 million of those small propane cylinders used for camp stoves and torches are thrown away every year—30,000 tons' worth. I noted that the manufacturer [Bernzomatic](#) makes it easy to find recyclers, and better yet, that another company sells [refillable cylinders](#). But there's also a campaign for refillable cylinders called [Refuel Your Fun](#), started by the California Product Stewardship Council. Thanks to CPSC's efforts, some 200 businesses in California now carry refillables; it provides a [national map](#) to show where they are available in all states. Wherever you live, you can play a role in promoting the new cylinders simply by begging local stores to carry them.

"Sierra Club members can be a key catalyst to driving the paradigm shift from disposable to refillable one-pound propane cylinders nationwide," Jordan Wells from Refuel Your Fuel told me. "Together we can refuel our fun, and with your help disposables will be a distant memory of a more wasteful past."

It also helps if you encourage propane dealers to purchase an adapter (only \$25) to enable them to refill the refillables. If you simply can't wait to get a refill, you can obtain a kit from many of the sources mentioned above. This enables you to tap a big tank to fill a cylinder yourself—although CPSC strongly prefers to have professionals do the job. There's a cost benefit, too: CPSC estimates that refillables, which sell for around \$12 to \$15, pay for themselves after about five refills, depending on propane prices. This is because a refill costs a lot less than a new disposable cylinder.

Among companies already providing refillables in stores or online are REI, Home Depot, Kamps Propane, West Marine, U-Haul, and some Ace and True Value stores, with Walmart and Lowe's on deck, while cylinders are also available from Amazon.com. U-Haul and some other outlets refill the cylinders, and U-Haul is gearing up to market them and refills nationwide. Some companies swap empties for fulls, as has long been the case with the big fat propane tanks.

There is also good news for those who use the cylinders on the job or for home repair, because they can attach to the same torches that fit the throwaway models.

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