

# Gas Detection Accessories – Why You Can't Live Without Them

When you hear the word “accessory,” what do you think of? A nice wrist watch? A pair of earrings and necklace? Or, how about the must-have cell phone protective case and hands-free wireless head set?

“...accessories are a required piece of any good product portfolio. From the fashion industry to the gas detection industry, accessories improve the convenience and effectiveness of core products...”

Maybe, for you, the word “accessory” conjures up images of truck bed rails, illuminated crossbow scopes, and infrared digital video scouting cameras. No matter how you most commonly associate the word “accessory,” all accessories are the necessary finishing touches that fill in the product performance gap for whatever you are doing, and will clearly make your life easier, more fulfilling and/or more productive. Essentially, they are needed for one good reason or another.

Simply put, it compliments something else, and makes it better. Just as everyday accessories play a critical role in many of our routine tasks, such as the charger that powers our smartphones to keep us connected – so do the accessories in the world of gas detection. Accessories are of particular importance in the gas detection industry in which products and services must consistently perform to the highest standards to ensure workers go home safely at the end of the day. Gas detection manufacturers routinely pay close attention to user operating habits to uncover the needs for new accessories that will enhance current products that help to keep workers safer in hazardous environments.

Let's take a look at a few commonly used gas detection accessories:

## Confined Space Sampling Accessories

The most common hazard in confined spaces is atmospheric hazards. By nature, confined spaces concentrate hazards, particularly atmospheric ones, as they displace breathable air and allow the accumulation of toxic gases. Workers must verify safe conditions through sampling the space. Workers traditionally accomplished this by either lowering a gas monitor into a confined space with a rope or holding onto it while turning their head away and breathing fresh air.

To properly sample a confined space, the operator must sample prior to entry, prior to re-entry, and continuously while work is being completed. Also, depending on the gases, it is also important to sample at the top, middle, and bottom of the confined space with exceeding four feet at any given time.

It is recommended to sample every four feet due to the weights of gases; some are lighter than air (methane), some are slightly lighter (carbon monoxide), and some are heavier than air (hydrogen sulphide). In these environments, the operator will be sampling for the oxygen content. If the oxygen content is between the levels of 19.5% and 23.5%, it would be safe to enter. The operator also will be sampling for combustible gas levels lower than 10% LEL, and lastly, if any toxic gases are present.

Fortunately, some key accessories have been developed over the years that are attached to, or integrated into, the instrument to improve its performance when sampling for confined spaces such as pumps (external and internal), tubing, filters, and probes. True to the definition, each sampling accessory is secondary to the instrument itself, but adds significantly to its convenience and effectiveness.

For example, the external slide-on pump, such as the Ventis™ Slide-on Pump from Industrial Scientific Corporation, and probe allows the gas detector to function as a personal monitor, but quickly be converted for confined space sampling applications. The slide-on pump provides excellent instrument flexibility with the extendable probe, allowing users to distance themselves from the confined space.



## Calibration Gas

You read that right – calibration gas. The often overlooked and trivialised cornerstone of a properly calibrated lifesaving gas monitor is calibration gas. A good manufacturer recognises the importance of quality calibration gas and manages its supply accordingly. It is truly a foundation accessory within the gas detection industry that has a direct impact on an instrument's ability to properly detect gas.

Unfortunately, many users give more thought to the instrument itself rather than the calibration gas that is designed to keep it working as the manufacturer intended. While there are many calibration gas options, if the gas is not supplied by the manufacturer, it might not have the necessary concentrations and stability to achieve an accurate calibration.

## Docking Stations

Since their introduction to the industry in the late 90s, docking stations have quickly become the king of gas detection accessories. Commonly confused with fellow accessory calibration stations, true docking stations go beyond simply charging and automating the bump testing and calibration of an instrument. They store every calibration, bump test, data event, and alarm that the instrument has ever recorded, as well as provide a single user interface for fleet wide instrument management and visibility.

Docking stations have been a game changing accessory by ensuring proper instrument maintenance and providing unique insight into user habits. They have enabled companies to thoroughly root cause incidents and increase the overall safety of their gas detection program. Docking stations have become so accepted as an accessory that it is hard to imagine the industry without them. They are a great example for how a unique vision, coupled with industry knowledge, can create an accessory that becomes as ubiquitous as the products themselves. Much like the chicken or the egg, it is hard to imagine

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what came first...the docking station or the instrument!

Docking stations eliminate the manual data download and, upon an instrument being docked, place the data within a data management system. This system organises and makes instrument data available immediately via an "in-the-cloud" dashboard, such as iNet® Control from Industrial Scientific. The dashboard presents the data in an easily understood format that provides visibility into your gas detection program at a glance. The system alerts you when problems occur and allows you to quickly access the data to identify the root cause of the issue.

Keep in mind that in order for your gas detection program and processes to improve, you must use the data available to you. A good gas detector data management system should provide full insight into the condition and proper use of your equipment and

all gas hazards to which your team is exposed. This data can be used to discuss behaviour and coach others on needed change that ultimately will lead to a safer workplace.

In conclusion, accessories are a required piece of any good product portfolio. From the fashion industry to the gas detection industry, accessories improve the convenience and effectiveness of core products. Within the gas detection industry, accessories such as docking stations, calibration gas, chargers/batteries and more, make gas detectors complete safety solutions that aid in keeping workers safer and ending death on the job.

To learn more about portable gas detection accessories from Industrial Scientific, visit <http://www.indsci.com/products/accessories/portable/>.



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