



# The Facts About Air Compressors

**d**raught systems use pressurized gas to push beer from keg to faucet. Because beer naturally contains carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), brewers recommend CO<sub>2</sub> or a blend of CO<sub>2</sub> and the inert gas nitrogen for this job. Unfortunately, some draught system operators try to save a little money by using compressed air instead of one or both of the proper gasses.

**Make no mistake: air damages beer flavor and can lead to poor performance and a shorter life for the draught system.**

## Air Ruins Beer Flavor

Brewers work hard to combat the number one enemy of beer, which is oxygen. In beer, oxygen produces stale flavors and aromas that may remind you of wet paper or cardboard. Because air contains oxygen, draught systems using an air compressor inject huge amounts of oxygen into the beer. When this happens, undesirable stale flavors and aromas quickly begin to affect beer flavor and can become overwhelming within 1 to 2 days.

## Air Makes Draught Lines Dirtier

Oxygen promotes the growth and spread of many micro-organisms. Using air in a draught system encourages growth of wild yeast and bacteria in the lines. This can lead to system

contamination and prompt a need for more frequent draught line cleaning. When proper cleaning is neglected, poor performance and damage to the draught system may occur.

## Air Compressors Introduce Contaminants Into Your Beer

Air compressors pickup and concentrate aromas and flavors from their surroundings and transmit them to the beer. Because of the large volume of gas in contact with the beer as a keg empties, these off-flavors quickly show up in the consumer's glass.

The purity of bottled gasses like CO<sub>2</sub> and nitrogen prevents off-flavors and discourages the growth of micro-organisms. It also eliminates the introduction of oxygen into the draught beer inventory so that it remains fresh and good-tasting throughout the life of each keg.

Because of the many negative effects on beer flavor and draught system performance, brewers oppose using air compressors for beer dispense. For more information on proper draught system operation visit [www.draughtquality.org](http://www.draughtquality.org).

*For more information on draught system cleaning or other components of a draught beer system, visit the Brewers Association's Draught Beer Quality Manual at: [www.draughtquality.org](http://www.draughtquality.org)*



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