

## TIPS FOR USING THE ROSS CANISTER SYSTEM

[www.schoolofpiping.com](http://www.schoolofpiping.com)

For the uninitiated, the Ross canister system consists of a plastic canister filled with Zeolite (aka, attapulgite, kitty litter). It is a clay material that absorbs moisture. It can be found in many appliances such as breathing masks and the tray your cat uses! It is very efficient, but most importantly it can be dried in a microwave oven and re-used.



The Zeolite sometimes becomes slightly glazed or brown in colour and then loses its efficiency and should be replaced. There are many options with the canister set up. There is an adjustable sleeve in the chanter section to let more or less air (and therefore moisture) to the chanter. I normally suggest this be placed in the widest possible opening, or the hose from the chanter removed entirely and a hose used from the blowpipe stock to divert air from going straight onto the chanter.



*Zeolite minerals.*

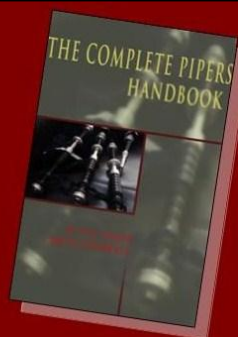
Before installing the canister I run around the edges with a file to ensure no sharp corners will wear the bag. It is recommended that the canister be filtered which can be seen in the relevant article at [schoolofpiping.com](http://schoolofpiping.com). After drying, all dust should be blown from the canister before reinstalling it. You should regularly clean out the hoses from the canister to ensure your instrument remains dust free. Small particles of dust can affect your reeds quite badly. I also recommend that you sieve the granules after drying.

I have seen it recommended that the canister should only be partially filled to allow more moisture to the reeds. I do not recommend this. The canister should be full to capacity to prevent the Zeolite rubbing together and creating more dust. More importantly less Zeolite will mean a shorter playable period. It is better to keep the moisture level more consistent and have a full canister of slightly moist Zeolite, keeping reeds drier for a longer period. To do this, only dry a portion of the canister. I often only dry 50% of the drone sections in hotter drier weather. I will usually only dry about half an inch of the chanter section even in wet weather. This gives far better stability, allows the moisture a chanter reed needs to operate and stops the sharp/shrill top hand a dry canister creates.

Vacuum any granules or dust out of the bag frequently and remember to regularly check the integrity of the hoses as leaking hoses will cause drone instability. I always glue the joins in new hoses before installing them as a precaution and check for sharp wire that may pierce the bag. Follow the instructions supplied with the canister for drying procedures and ensure that the canister is angled correctly in the bag by twisting the hoses, so that it sits sideways and does not contact your arm during cut-outs.

The newer (maroon coloured) canister has some valves at the top of the manifold to allow more moist air into the hoses. I prefer to bypass these by removing the valves and inserting the hoses all the way down to the base of the manifold. The system seems to be a lot steadier when it is completely airtight.

More of this type of information can be found in "The Complete Pipers Handbook".  
<http://www.schoolofpiping.com/handbook.html>



## The Complete Pipers Handbook

Is a must for every serious piper. Never before has a more comprehensive guide been published. Maintenance, set up, refinement, tuning, setting up bands, performance psychology and much more!

Available from: [www.schoolofpiping.com](http://www.schoolofpiping.com) selected stockists.