

# Oxygen Use at Home

## Fire Safety and Guidelines for Storing and Handling Oxygen Equipment

Thank you for choosing Home Care Medical to be your oxygen provider. Safety is extremely important to us. Please follow these guidelines to keep you and your family safe.

### Fire Safety

Oxygen is safe when used properly. When not used properly, it can be dangerous. It will fuel a fire, causing it to start easily and to burn faster and hotter. Sparks and materials that normally would not burn can start a fire because of the oxygen you use. It is very important to protect yourself, those around you and your home when using oxygen.

### Follow these fire prevention tips

- **NEVER SMOKE** or allow others to smoke near where oxygen is being used or stored.
- Put signs on all doors to let visitors and emergency personnel know oxygen is in use. “No Smoking” signs should also be posted.
- Use and store oxygen in well ventilated areas (not in cabinets, closets, other confined spaces or behind curtains.) The small amount of oxygen gas continually vented from oxygen units can accumulate in a confined space and become a fire hazard.
- Keep grease, oil and petroleum products away from your oxygen equipment. Do not use lotions or ointments (Vaseline, Vicks, Chapstick, etc.) in or around your nose. Oxygen can react with these oily substances and cause burns. Only use waterbased products.
- Do not use anything flammable while using your oxygen including cleaning fluid, gasoline, paint thinner, aerosols or alcohol-containing sprays.
- Keep oxygen at least five feet away from flames or heat sources, including gas stoves, barbecue grills, space heaters, fireplaces and candles. Do not relight a pilot light.
- Do not use electric razors, hair dryers or any heat producing and electrical appliance that has a motor while you are using oxygen.
- Do not use bedding or clothes made of wool, nylon or synthetic fabrics including electric blankets as these materials have the tendency to produce static electricity. The use of cotton material bedding and clothing will avoid sparks from static electricity.
- Turn your oxygen equipment off when you are not using it.
- Have a working smoke detector. Check the batteries regularly.
- Keep a working fire extinguisher within easy reach and be sure everyone knows how to use it.
- Plan and practice an evacuation route for you and your family.
- Discuss fire safety for neighboring residences and buildings.

### Oxygen Tank Safety

- Oxygen tanks should always be stored in a stand or cart to prevent tipping or falling.
- Unsecured tanks should be placed flat on the floor. Do not allow tanks to stand or lean in an upright position while unsecured.
- Do not drag, roll, slide or drop tanks. Do not lift a tank by its cap or valve.
- Do not put oxygen tubing under rugs or furniture.
- Oxygen tanks should be transported in the passenger compartment of a vehicle with the windows open slightly (2-3 inches) to provide adequate ventilation.
- When transporting tanks in a vehicle, be sure they are secured and positioned properly.
- Never leave tanks in a car trunk or a hot vehicle.

### Concentrator Safety

- Use only a properly grounded wall outlet. A grounded outlet has three holes and can take a three-pronged plug.
- Do not plug the concentrator into an outlet that has other appliances plugged into it.
- Do not use extension cords.
- Avoid using power sources that create heat or sparks. Use a power supply or electrical circuit that meets or exceeds the amperage requirements of the concentrator.
- Do not put oxygen tubing and electrical cords under furniture or rugs.

### Liquid Oxygen Safety

- Liquid oxygen is very cold and can cause burns if it spills and comes in direct contact with your skin.
- Avoid touching any frosted or icy connectors of either the stationary or portable units.
- Avoid contact with any stream of liquid oxygen while filling the portable unit.
- Keep both your portable and stationary units in an upright position. Do not lay them down or place them on their sides.
- Secure the units when you travel so they do not tip.
- When using your portable unit in the car, open the windows about 2-3 inches for proper ventilation.



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