



## Medical Oxygen Safety

People utilizing medical oxygen need to take precautions. Smoking while on oxygen or using open flames can be deadly. Oxygen therapy provides a patient with a higher concentration of oxygen (40-100%) than the air we naturally breath (20%). Oxygen enriched environment materials ignite easier, burn at faster rates, and burn with more intensity than they would in normal conditions. The following is a list of safety measures that should be implemented whenever medical oxygen is in use:



### Smoking, Heat Sources, and Open Flames

- Never smoke while using oxygen. Warn visitors to not smoke near you.
- Post a "No Smoking" sign near the entrance to your residence
- While in a restaurant with your portable oxygen equipment, sit in the nonsmoking section away from open flames such as candles or warming burners
- Keep at least 10' away from open flames or other heat and ignition sources. This includes candles, lighters, stovetops, ovens, space heaters, fireplaces, etc.

### Warning Signs

- Place a sign (provided by your supplier) on the door of your residence or in a highly visible window to alert fire department personnel that oxygen is stored and used in your home
- To avoid accidents, ask visitors to be careful around tubing, and inform them about cylinder safety rules.

### Bedding and Clothing Material

- Avoid bedding or clothing material made of wool, nylon or synthetic fabrics as these materials have the tendency to produce static electricity. The use of cotton material bedding and clothes will avoid sparks from static electricity.
- Do not keep a cylinder under bed linens, behind curtains, in closets, or under clothes – if these items become oxygen-enriched, a static spark has the potential to cause a fire



### Flammable Products, Petroleum Based Products

- Never use flammable products, such as aerosol sprays, paint thinners, gasoline, or oil-based lubricants, while using oxygen. Oil, grease or readily flammable materials shall never be permitted to come in contact with oxygen cylinders, valves, regulators, gauges or fittings.
- Do not use oil-based or petroleum-based cosmetics, hair lubricants, face and hand lotions, lip balms, or aerosol sprays while using oxygen. These products can react with oxygen and cause a fire resulting in serious personal injury or death.

## **Storage**

- Secure your cylinder so that it cannot be knocked over.
- Store and use cylinders only in an upright position and only in well ventilated areas.
- Do not store cylinders in your car, and always open your car windows when traveling with a cylinder. Do not store cylinders in the trunk of your car. Do not store cylinders in areas where the temperature could exceed 120 degrees F.
- Store oxygen in clean, dry locations away from direct sunlight.
- Cylinders should not be stored near stocks of combustible materials or near heat sources.

## **Additional Safety Concerns**

- Makes sure your home has working smoke alarms. They should be installed in every bedroom, in the hallway or area immediately outside of the bedrooms, and on every level of the home. Smoke alarms should be tested monthly.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your home
- Notify the fire department that you store oxygen at your home
- When empty, ensure the cylinder valve is closed
- Keep your children and pets away from your oxygen equipment at all times
- Never use your medical oxygen cylinder for applications other than medical oxygen
- Use a properly grounded wall outlet for your oxygen generator. Do not use an extension cord.