



# Medical Oxygen in a Vehicle.

The purpose of this leaflet is to highlight key safety information for patients and drivers where medical oxygen cylinders or medical liquid oxygen equipment is used and/or transported for personal use in a vehicle. It is perfectly safe to both carry and use medical oxygen in a vehicle providing you follow the golden rules set out below.

## Planning your journey

When planning your trip, ensure you have enough oxygen – but not too much. Take some extra in case you want to stay out a little longer or are held up in traffic. Alternatively, reduce the amount of oxygen carried by arranging to have supplies available at your destination.

## Oxygen

Oxygen is necessary for anything to burn. If the amount of oxygen in the air is increased objects burn more readily and more fiercely. In confined spaces, such as a poorly ventilated vehicle, if your clothing, the seats or the carpets become enriched with oxygen, they will catch fire more easily. It only needs an ignition source, such as someone smoking or an electrical fault to start a fire. If you or your passenger(s) need to use medical oxygen, take care not to allow oxygen levels to rise.

### Avoid the risks of fire



#### Smoking

Never let anybody smoke in a vehicle when carrying or using oxygen.

This includes everybody - not just the user or the driver.



#### Ventilation

Make sure you have good ventilation to avoid creating an oxygen enriched environment. The best way to improve ventilation is to open a window.



#### Liquid oxygen

Take extra care with liquid oxygen containers. They continually vent cold oxygen gas (even when not in use) and could leak liquid if not kept upright. Secure the container upright and open windows to stop the oxygen building up.



#### Refuelling the vehicle

Avoid using oxygen while your vehicle is being refuelled. Close the cylinder valve before refuelling and close any windows near the refuelling point.

## Keep your cylinders secure



### Cylinder restraint

If involved in an accident you could be injured by unsecured items being thrown around inside the vehicle.

Ensure cylinders that are in use are located within easy reach of the user and that they are securely stowed. Use a carrying bag or box, if provided, to assist in securing the cylinder.



### Turn it off when not in use

Keep the valves closed on any cylinder not in use.



### Cylinder security

If you leave your oxygen equipment in a vehicle make sure it is out of sight. There have been many cases where opportunist thieves have stolen cylinders and oxygen equipment.



### Cylinder storage

Cylinders that are not in use should be secured in the luggage area with their valves closed.

## Driver responsibilities



### Legal requirements

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure their vehicle is safe. The driver must ensure that any oxygen equipment is carried safely even if the driver is not the user or the patient's carer.



### Documents?

The driver does not need to carry any special documents to transport medical oxygen. However, it is useful to have the right information to assist the emergency services in the event of an incident.

See 'Helping the emergency services'.



### Signs on your vehicle

As you are only carrying small quantities of medical oxygen, you are not required to display any hazard warning labels or signs on your vehicles.



### Insurance of your vehicle

Make sure you have informed your insurance company that you are carrying medical oxygen in their vehicle.

## Suspected medical oxygen cylinder leaks

If you suspect that there is a leak from your medical oxygen cylinder, take the following immediate actions:

- Close the cylinder valve immediately (if safe to do so) and increase the ventilation in the vehicle.
- If the leak continues, park the vehicle in a safe location, away from naked flames and flammable substances. Do not smoke or allow anybody to smoke within 3 metres of the vehicle.
- Remove the leaking cylinder from the vehicle and place in a safe, well ventilated area.
- Ensure that the vehicle has been adequately ventilated before continuing with the journey.
- If you can not stop the leak, do not return a leaking cylinder into the vehicle.
- If additional help is required, contact your medical oxygen supplier for advice.

## Helping the emergency services

The emergency services attending an accident or incident should be advised that the vehicle is carrying medical oxygen.

They will want to know whether you are carrying cylinders, liquid oxygen or both and how many cylinders and/or liquid oxygen containers are in the vehicle as well as their size and location in the vehicle.

For information the UN classification for these products are:

- Medical oxygen in cylinders, UN 1072, OXYGEN COMPRESSED.
- Medical liquid oxygen, UN 1073, OXYGEN, REFRIGERATED LIQUID.

Class 2.2 non-toxic, non-flammable compressed gas.

Class 5.1 oxidising agent.

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