




Portable Oxygen Guidance Sheet

Whose responsibility is the portable oxygen?

- It is not the responsibility of the volunteer or the coordinator to operate, nor know how to operate the oxygen.
- Any person who receives oxygen at home will have had a risk assessment carried out by their oxygen supplier.
- They will also have received education on how to use it safely, along with written information.
- This includes how long they can safely use their portable oxygen for.
- Important contact numbers are provided.
- If the client does not normally take responsibility for their portable oxygen, for example they are confused and their carer takes responsibility, then they would not be taken out of their home by their volunteer.

What does portable oxygen look like?

- Different equipment is available to enable oxygen users to get out and about.
- The client's oxygen will be their own responsibility.

Oxygen Cylinder	Liquid Oxygen	Portable Oxygen Concentrator
<p>Filled with oxygen gas. Some users may fill their own cylinders at home using a special homefill system - the volunteer should not do this.</p>	<p>Filled with liquid oxygen. The user will have been trained to fill this from a 'reservoir' at home – the volunteer should not do this. Cylinder can be cold after filling so leave some time before touching it. Sometimes this can make a hissing sound but this is normal, it is not broken.</p>	<p>Draws in room air and 'concentrates it' to increase the oxygen content. Can run off mains power, battery or off the 12v supply in the car. About the size of hand luggage for a plane.</p>
		

Things to do before making a journey with your client:

- 1. Inform your insurance company that you will be carrying a small amount of portable oxygen. It will not affect your premium but closes a potential loophole should anything occur. If your insurance company has any queries please contact your coordinator.**
- 2. Consider how long you will be out for (journey time, meeting time, and a bit extra just in case).**
- 3. Ask the client how long their portable oxygen supply will last?**
 - As part of the education they received when given their portable oxygen, the client will have been advised how long they can safely go out for.
 - This can be very different from person to person.
 - How quickly a cylinder empties or how long a Portable concentrator lasts will depend on a number of different factors.
 - It is neither the volunteer's nor the coordinators responsibility to establish how long the portable oxygen supply will last.
- 4. Ask the client what their 'back up plan' is should their portable oxygen supply run out:**
 - Not everyone needs to be on oxygen all the time. The client may advise you that they will be ok without supplemental oxygen for the time it takes to get to an oxygen supply.
 - In the event that client's oxygen supply runs out, it will be up to the them to advise you whether to:
 - Take them home
 - Take them to a local hospital
 - Dial 999

Other helpful hints for making a journey

- Fill up the petrol tank before collecting your client as oxygen use should be avoided within the petrol station
- The client should ensure that their tubing is as short as possible. Secure cylinders and other equipment so they are not free to move around (the use of a dedicated bracket and/or bungee cord may be useful).
- Ask the client how their oxygen should be transported. For example gas cylinders can lie flat, whereas some liquid oxygen systems need to remain upright – it is the client's responsibility to know how their oxygen should be transported.
- Take care when getting in and out the car to avoid trapping the oxygen tubing in the car door as this may restrict the oxygen flow.
- When not using their oxygen, the client will ensure the valve is securely closed.
- The client should not leave their oxygen unattended.
- Children should not tamper with the equipment
- Car stickers are not required for small quantities of oxygen such as portable cylinders.
- The vehicle's ventilation should be set to draw fresh air from outside.



Other useful safety advice

- Oxygen on its own will not explode, but it will support burning.
- The client should stay at least 3 metres from sparking objects, naked sources of flame and extreme heat.
- The client will ensure the oxygen supply is switched off when not in use and avoid laying their mask or nasal cannulae down while their oxygen is on.
- Allow at least 30 minutes after turning off oxygen before going near sparking objects, naked sources of flame and extreme heat as oxygen can build up in your clothing.
- Smoking is extremely dangerous while oxygen is in use. The client will not smoke while their oxygen is in use. Other people in the room/vehicle should not smoke, including e-cigarettes.
- Ensure hands are clean and dry when handling oxygen equipment as some face and hand creams are oil based.
- Don't tamper with oxygen equipment nor change the flow rate (this is set by a healthcare professional)

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to ask your coordinator