



Burn Prevention: Medical Oxygen Safety

The use of portable medical oxygen in the home has grown significantly over the past decade. For a person with breathing difficulties, medical oxygen provides air containing a higher percentage of oxygen. Fire needs oxygen to burn. If a fire should start in an oxygen-enriched area, it can burn hotter and spread faster. Homes where medical oxygen is used need to follow specific fire safety rules to keep people safe from fire and burns.

Safety Tips

- There is no safe way to smoke in the home when oxygen is in use. A patient on oxygen should never smoke.
- Candles, matches, wood stoves and even sparking toys can be ignition sources and should not be used in the home.
- Keep oxygen cylinders at least 5 feet away from any heat source, open flames or electrical devices.
- Body oil, hand lotion and items containing oil and grease can easily ignite. Keep oil and grease away from where oxygen is in use.
- Never use aerosol sprays containing combustible materials near the oxygen.
- Post “No Smoking” and “No Open Flames” signs inside and outside the home to remind people not to smoke.

Oxygen Facts

- Oxygen saturates fabric-covered furniture, clothing, hair and bedding, making it easier for a fire to start and spread.
- Smoking materials are the leading heat source resulting in medical oxygen related fires, injuries and deaths.

Source: [nfpa.org/education](https://www.nfpa.org/education)

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