

## POSITION PAPERS

### Guidelines Regarding the Safe Transportation of Oxygen on a School Bus

January 24, 2013

The Department of Education has established the following guidelines regarding the safe transportation of oxygen on a school bus:

- A. Oxygen shall be transported on school buses only when it is medically necessary. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) for a child with disabilities must document the oxygen use requirement.
  - 1. Prior to initial transportation, school administration and transportation personnel should be informed as to the type and size of the oxygen tank to be transported.
  - 2. Regarding a student using oxygen only on an “as needed” basis, the decision as to what is necessary is the responsibility of trained medical personnel only. This decision is not the responsibility of the bus operator or aide.
    - a. A determination must be made as to who will load and unload the medical support equipment. Appropriate training must be provided for these procedures.
  - 3. The development of an emergency plan is strongly recommended in the event of a medical emergency or equipment failure.
  - 4. It is recommended that only one medical support device per student be transported.
  - 5. The transportation department should not assume responsibility for storing any medical equipment.
  - 6. Changes in medical equipment or transportation must be so noted on the IEP.
  - 7. A contingency procedure should be developed to avoid oxygen being transported without proper securement in the event the regular bus breaks down.
- B. Oxygen must be transported in a secure container maintained in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. The oxygen must be housed in a portable unit and should be less than 15 pounds total weight.
  - 1. Gas oxygen tanks shall have a maximum capacity of twenty-two (22) cubic feet (Medical E). Medical E tanks are usually no larger than 4 ½ inches in diameter and 31 inches in length.
  - 2. Liquid oxygen units shall have a maximum capacity of thirty-eight (38) cubic feet and be no larger than 5 inches in diameter and 13 inches in length. For transportation purposes, these units must not be larger than 38 cubic feet.
  - 3. All oxygen shall have valves and regulators that are protected against breakage. Manufacturer’s precautions are usually printed on a label attached to the cylinder and should be followed whenever possible.
- C. All oxygen tanks shall be securely attached to prevent movement and leakage. This securement should be located on the sidewall of the school bus in the upright position at a rib or body support in a rack or mounting bracket capable of sustaining five (5) times the weight of the tank and contents.

1. Since they are under pressure and could accelerate a fire, all oxygen tanks (gas or liquid) must be secured away from intense heat or friction.
  2. In cases where the oxygen is attached to a wheelchair or other support equipment, the tank shall be removed and secured prior to transport.
  3. Oxygen tanks or other medical support equipment shall never be stored or secured in the head impact zone.
- D. While it is not mandatory to place any placards or labels on the bus, a decal indicating medical support equipment is in use may be helpful to emergency personnel in the event of an accident.

The transportation of oxygen on a school bus creates added concern and responsibility to all involved. However, with prior planning and proper securement, oxygen can be safely transported.

Thank you for this opportunity to assist you. If you have any additional questions or comments, please contact the Ohio Department of Education, Pupil Transportation Office at (614) 466-4230.