



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Education
TRANSPORTING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
Transporting of Oxygen on School Buses

Guidelines

The Maine 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 and transportation 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 assistant.

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. When it is determined through the PET process that a student must be transported on a school bus accompanied by medical support equipment including oxygen, it is strongly recommended that an aid/bus assistant also be assigned.
 4. The development of an emergency plan is required and shall cover response procedures for the bus driver, the aide and dispatch in the event of a medical emergency, equipment failure, or crash. All personnel shall receive training appropriate to the plan.
 5. It is recommended that only one medical support device per student be transported.
 6. The school district transportation department should not assume responsibility for storing any medical equipment.

7. Changes in medical equipment or transportation requirements must be so noted in the IEP.
 8. A contingency procedure should be developed to avoid oxygen being transported without being properly secured in the event another bus must be used due to the breakdown or crash of the usual bus or if the student rides on a different bus on occasion.
- 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 fifteen (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 4-1/2 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 five (5) inches in diameter and thirteen (13) inches in length. For transportation purposes, these units must not be larger than thirty-eight (38) cubic feet.
 3. All oxygen tanks shall have valves and regulators that are protected against breakage.
- Manufacturer's precautions and instructions are usually printed on a label attached to the cylinder and must be followed.
- C. All oxygen tanks and support equipment shall be securely attached to prevent movement and leakage. This securement must be located on the sidewall of the school bus with the tank 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 /equipment and contents.
1. Since tanks 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 to the bus as stated above prior to transport.
 3. Oxygen tanks or other medical support equipment shall never be stored or secured in an area where the wheel chair occupant could strike against it in a crash situation.

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- D. Oxygen enriches the combustibility potential when used in an enclosed area. Safeguards must be in place to prevent any use of open flames in the bus compartment while the oxygen is onboard (e.g. a child with a cigarette lighter or matches for example)
- E. A decal indicating medical support equipment is in use and a placard indicating compressed oxygen on board must be placed in a visible position on the exterior side of the bus to assist emergency personnel in the event of a crash.

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.