



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
MAINE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
152 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333



MICHAEL SAUSCHUCK
COMMISSIONER

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To All Maine EMS Services and stakeholders

Recently, a Maine EMS service experienced a failure of oxygen delivery involving a portable oxygen cylinder. This cylinder had an integrated regulator/handle (non-removable) and during daily checks, indicated a level of approximately 2000 psi. The incident occurred during treatment of a patient with a respiratory issue, and when the delivery device was used, oxygen was believed to be being administered, when in fact it was not. The likely cause of this was a stuck needle that indicated the tank was at 2000psi, when the tank was actually empty or nearly empty. There was no obvious damage to the tank or regulator. The tank was returned to the distributor and they and the FDA are investigating this unusual and rare event. Maine EMS reminds providers of the importance of regular equipment checks, to include ensuring oxygen flow before and during patient care. Thanks to the EMS service and providers that self-reported this incident and their efforts in improving crew and patient safety. Maine EMS will share further information if, and when, it becomes available. If you have any concerns about your services oxygen tanks or regulators, please contact your supplier directly.

