Title: Oxygen Systems and Equipment
Date issued / last revision: December 29, 2003
Date effective: Immediately

Oxygen Systems and Equipment

Statement:

This policy establishes the standard requirements for the use, storage, re-supply and disposal of oxygen cylinders and their related equipment. This policy incorporates current Department of Transportation requirements (CFR 49-100/199) and company specific practices.

Purpose:

To ensure the safety of both employees and patients who may come in contact with oxygen equipment and cylinders.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Cooperstown Medical Transport, Inc. (CMT) employees, full time, part time, interns and volunteers.

Policy:

1. It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that the standards set below are strictly enforced, thereby ensuring legal compliance and safety.

2. All oxygen cylinders and equipment should be inspected upon initial delivery to the station and bi-weekly thereafter.

3. The following is a list that outlines the specific items to be inspected:
    a. Cylinders
        i. Leaks
        ii. Bulging cylinders
        iii. Inoperative valves / safety devices
        iv. Physical abuse / rust on cylinder or neck
        v. Proper marking / coding
            A. Normal hydrostatic testing is every five (5) years unless marked with a five-pointed star, which allows for a ten (10) year retest interval.

        i. Foreign material around the neck, valve, regulator assembly or fittings.

    If an oxygen cylinder were found to have one of the above deficiencies it should be brought to the attention of the delivering agent, your supervisor and/or the Supply Coordinator.

    b. Flow meters, portable and installed:
        i. Must be capable of flowing variable rates up to 15 lpm

Any gauge, flow meter or regulator that is broken or suspected to be broken or functioning improperly must be taken out of service and a supervisor notified.

4. Humidifiers:
    a. Our service, in some instances, is required to deliver humidified oxygen.
    b. The appropriate equipment and supplies are provided in each of the ambulances, in the form of single use disposable containers as required per part 800. Since "sterile water" is just that, "sterile", it should not be attached to the system until it is to be used.
    c. When a run is over and humidified oxygen is no longer needed, the system should be cleaned and dried, before the vehicle is considered back in service. Keep in mind that the sterile water container is a one patient use item. Once the bottle seal is compromised the remaining portion is to be discarded.

5. Oxygen Volume Requirements:
    a. An "adequate" supply of oxygen availability as stated by the DOT and this agency is defined as "at least 2000 psi in any combination of portable cylinders and fixed (installed) cylinders, at the beginning of a "shift." This should be identified during your pre-trip inspection. Greater than 500 psi must be available per cylinder or that cylinder is considered out of service. Once the ambulance is finished for the day, the oxygen cylinders should be turned off and the system bled. This relieves pressure within the system and ensures oxygen is not lost due to leakage while the vehicle is not in use.
    b. Oxygen used during a run should be documented on the PCR.
    c. When total oxygen supply falls below "adequate", as defined above, the vehicle will be considered out of service until adequate oxygen supplies are replaced.

6. Oxygen Cylinder Security:
    a. Ambulance: All cylinders (portable and installed) must be held in place mechanically by the securing devices provided in the ambulance. This ensures the required security and protection for the cylinder.
    b. The Director of Operations and the Fleet Manager must approve any securing device added to an ambulance prior to the ambulance being put in service.

7. Smoking:
    a. Since oxygen supports combustion it presents a serious fire hazard. It is the policy of this company and current state safety standards that any possible ignition source be kept a minimum of twenty (20) feet from any oxygen container. The most frequently encountered ignition source is cigarette smoking. It is the responsibility of the employees to ensure that they do not create a hazard. Refer to the *Smoking and Tobacco Use* policy.

    Do Not Smoke In or Around The Ambulance or Oxygen Cylinders.

8. Oxygen, cylinders and related equipment represent a potential hazard to both employees and the patient and should not be regarded lightly. If something seems "wrong", bring it to your supervisor's attention immediately.