

PLANNING OXYGEN SUPPLIES FOR RESPIRATORY PATIENTS WHEN TRAVELLING

MGC 141/21

Revision of 141/13

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Amendments to 141/13

Section	Change
General	Review of the entire document

Note: Technical changes from the previous edition are underlined

1 Introduction

Throughout Europe, medical oxygen respiratory therapy is recognised by the health authorities as a means of treating patients with respiratory disease to improve the quality of life of thousands of patients. A large group of these patients are still very active and have the desire to move outside of their home environment and to travel for extended distances.

It is normally the responsibility of the Homecare Service Providers to assist in organising the medical oxygen therapy service whilst the patient is away from the home, including trips abroad.

The requirements from the patient to be able to use the oxygen therapy system outside the home is constantly increasing. The patients require the ability to visit public places, such as restaurants and cinemas, whilst being able to use the ambulatory oxygen systems safely.



This document provides a guide to the patient's Homecare Service Provider for the process of organising the medical oxygen therapy supply for patients whilst travelling away from their home.

It also provides guidance that can be given to the patient about the safe use of the medical oxygen therapy supply on public transport and in public places.

This document does not attempt to describe all of the possible organisational requirements for the patient to plan their trips or define the issues around the payments and reimbursement of the associated fees.

2 Scope

The scope of this document is to provide advice to the Homecare Service Provider about the minimum safety precautions and practical advice to be given to the patient when they require use of medical oxygen supply systems outside the home environment and whilst travelling.

The advice can also be provided to the travel companies, such as airlines, train and bus operators and public services providers as guideline for the safe use of medical oxygen supply system for domiciliary patients.

It details the actions and roles for the:

- patient when travelling with equipment;
- current Homecare Service Provider (current HSP) in providing support the patient when travelling; and
- Homecare Service Provider at the destination (HSP at destination) in providing a suitable medical oxygen supply system for the patient when travelling.

It also covers specific guidelines for homecare respiratory patients for using oxygen when:

- in transit;
- at locations outside the home when in the Current HSP's area; and
- travelling away from home for longer periods when in the HSP at destination's area.

The document provides:

- templates for handouts to the patient giving the minimum safety requirements for the use of medical oxygen supply systems in transit;
- templates for handouts to the travel service provider giving the minimum safety requirements for the use of medical oxygen equipment in transit;
- information covering carrying and/or using medical oxygen systems on different forms of transport and in different public environments; and
- advice on the use and the permissions required when using the medical oxygen supply equipment on public transport and in public areas.

3 Purpose

The purpose of the document is :

- to provide guidance on the safe use of medical oxygen when away from home;
- to provide information to be given to the travel/accommodation providers;
- to outline the information required from the patient to ensure oxygen supply is assured during travel, at destination and when coming back home.

4 Definitions

Contracting Entity	An organisation responsible for the payment of the oxygen therapy service.
Carer	A person (for example a relative or friend) who can assist the patient with their therapy.
Current Homecare Service Provider (Current HSP)	The Homecare Service Provider who is routinely providing therapy services at the patient's home.
Homecare Service Provider at destination (HSP at destination)	The Homecare Service Provider who is temporarily providing therapy services during or at the journey of the patient.
<u>SDS</u>	<u>Safety Data Sheet</u>
<u>EHIC</u>	<u>European Health Insurance Card</u>
<u>MOSS</u>	<u>Medical Oxygen Supply Systems</u>

5 Travel plan

The proposed travel plan provides a logical order of actions to be taken by the relevant parties involved in making arrangements for the supply of the patient's medical oxygen therapy system. The travel plan is used to ensure that the patient can continue to use their medical oxygen therapy system safely during the journey and at their destination point.

The key stakeholders in preparing the travel plan are the:

- patient/patient carer;
- current Homecare Service Provider (current HSP);
- Homecare Service Provider at destination (HSP at destination) (where different);
- transport operators;
- patient's prescriber;
- contracting entity (payor) and
- travel and accommodation provider(s).

The basic principles for ensuring that the patient receives an appropriate service are that the:

- patient is recommended to contact their doctor to obtain authorisation for travelling and to review their oxygen requirements;
- patient gets in contact with the current HSP to communicate in advance all necessary information about the travel plan;
- the HSP at destination should provide all products and equipment needed for the therapy
- the HSP at destination will be responsible for training the patient and/or caregiver ensuring that they are competent in using the equipment and for providing a backup service (if needed) in case of equipment failure;
- oxygen supply equipment provided by the current HSP should not be used other than for the duration of the journey and
- Administration for the payment of the service whilst travelling must be checked prior to starting the journey.

Suggested of administrative documents to be used in the preparation of the travel plan are given in Appendix 1. These forms should be completed by the patient as check list to allow the correct and complete organisation of the journey.

The travel plan summarises the activities that shall be carried out when organising a journey and specifies the responsibilities and information to be completed:

- prior to the journey (see Section 6);
- at the destination (see Section 7) and
- after the journey (see Section 8).

6 Actions prior to making the journey

6.1 Patient information

Prior to making the journey, the Patient / Carer should supply the following information to the Current Homecare Service Provider:

- travel dates;
- mode of travel;
- final travel details - including any flight, cruise or train references;
- length / time of journey and
- travel itinerary (including all locations, addresses of hotels and final destination).

The Current HSP is responsible for providing information to the patient/carer concerning the specification of equipment being carried in own vehicle for insurance purposes.

The Current HSP should advise the patient that they should contact their doctor to inform them that they intend to travel. Dependant on the type of travel and on their physical condition, it could be necessary for the patient undergo further examination. This will determine whether the Patient's prescribed flowrates need to be modified for when they are travelling to the destination. This is especially important when flying, where the oxygen content is likely to fall below normal atmospheric levels. This could result in the patient receiving a modified prescription to cover their travelling activities.

The Current HSP should confirm whether they are able to supply oxygen at destination using the Current HSP's local services.

Where this is not possible the Current HSP should endeavour to provide the patient with contact details of an appropriate oxygen therapy supplier. Alternatively, the Current HSP should provide the patient/carer with contact details of companies that specialise in making travel arrangements for oxygen therapy patients.

The patient is responsible for carrying out all the preparations when planning to travel away from home. This planning should ideally be completed at least two weeks in advance of the journey in order to ensure that an appropriate service can be provided by all stakeholders. The patient shall take notice of the information supplied by the current HSP regarding operating instructions of the devices during travel and is responsible to verify beforehand the compatibility of electrical connections at the destination.

The current HSP should be aware of the travel planning and the therapy details:

- Travel planning: the patient/carer shall provide the requested information to the current HSP (example of checklist for HSP – see appendix 1).
- Therapy details: The patient/carer shall provide the requested information to their doctor and shall provide feedback to the current HSP (example see - appendix 2).

The patient should be advised by the current HSP to obtain a European Health Insurance Card prior to travelling to another country. This will provide them with access to the state provided health care during their stay within another Member State.

More information concerning the European Health Insurance Card is given in Appendix 5.

6.2 Information for the Homecare Service Provider at destination

When Homecare Service provider at destination is not the same company as the current HSP, the current HSP and the patient need to ensure the complete travel details and therapy details are made available to the HSP at destination to arrange appropriate oxygen supplies. It may also be beneficial to provide the HSP at destination with the address and contact details of the current HSP.

Where the travel details mean that the patient will visit several destinations, they will need to complete the details for each destination where a different service provider will supply the oxygen.

It is recommended that the current HSP's supply equipment is not used whilst the patient is away from home and that the equipment at the proposed destination(s) is provided by the HSP at destination which will:

- ensure that the equipment is compatible with the local conditions;
- provide a suitable replacement policy for when the equipment malfunctions;
- give a clear distinction of equipment ownership between the HSP at destination and the current HSP; and
- ancillary equipment, such as oxygen conserving devices may not be suitable for use with the new equipment and requirements for this type of equipment should be made clear when arranging the supplies with the HSP at destination.

It should be explained to the patient that they will need to be trained in the use of the new equipment when they arrive at the destination.

Where the patient requires an oxygen supply whilst travelling, the current HSP should provide the patient with a suitable supply system that will have sufficient capacity for the duration of the journey, including the return back home. It is important to inform the patient that this equipment shall be retained and returned after they have returned home.

Where the equipment is electrically powered, a check should be made to ensure that the voltage supply and power lead is compatible with the electrical supply available at all destinations. This is likely to apply to portable concentrators, where recharging of the batteries is required.

7 Actions at the destination

Having been informed by the patient/carer or the current HSP that an oxygen therapy service is required, prior to the patient travelling the Homecare Service Provider at destination shall:

- make the necessary arrangements to supply the medical oxygen equipment and subsequent medical oxygen supplies, at the patients' destination (e.g. hotel,...)
- communicate with the patient on their possible travel plans locally.

When the patient arrives at destination the HSP at destination shall:

- ensure that the patient is trained in the correct use and safe handling of the oxygen equipment, including knowledge of the local emergency number;
- ensure the patient knows the actions to be taken in case of an emergency;
- provide contact details during normal and outside office hours;
- advise the accommodation provider of the procedures for the safe handling and storage of the oxygen equipment; and
- provide a fact sheet giving a brief description of the safe handling and use of the supply equipment, detailing suitable storage and usage locations and precautions to be taken so that the patient and other travellers are not put at risk.

8 Actions after the journey

Normally the travel period start- and end date are known before the departure. If an end date is not known in advance, the patient should well in advance to the actual end of stay:

- inform the HSP at destination of the completion of the stay;
- inform the current HSP that oxygen therapy supplies are required on return;
- provide confirmation to the HSP at destination that the equipment detailed on the checklist is available for collection; and
- where applicable, confirm to the relevant person that the invoices from the HSP at destination can be paid.

9 Information fact sheets

Typical safety cards are shown in Appendix 3 that give details of the safe use of oxygen whilst using different means of transport. These safety cards are primarily designed for use by the patient/carer but should also be given to the transport provider to detail the procedures to be used with oxygen when in use by the patient.

These safety cards include travelling with oxygen:

- on public transport including coaches (buses), metro and trains (see Appendix 6);
- by private transport (see Appendix 7);
- by plane (see Appendix 8);
- by boat (see Appendix 9).

Appendix 10 provides a typical fact sheet that can be prepared by the Homecare Service Provider, detailing:

- General statement on the nature of the Medical Oxygen requirement for the patient
- typical flowrates and the implications to confined spaces;
- precautions that need to be taken when using the oxygen in a public place; and
- precautions for restraining the equipment when in transit.

The purpose of this fact sheet is that it should be made available to the patient/carer so that they can provide it to the transport provider, restaurant and hotel owner and any other provider who offer services to the general public. The fact sheet is intended to remove any concerns that could be expressed by the general public when oxygen is being used in their presence.

When travelling in group, Appendix 11 contains a checklist for the elements that should be considered by the organisers of the group travel.

A Frequently asked questions list is also included in Appendix 12 of this document.

10 Patient travel dossier

The current HSP should advise the Patient / Carer to carry the following documents when travelling:

- travel Plan details (Appendix 3);
- prescription details (Appendix 4)
- the specific product Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for either compressed or liquid medical oxygen dependant on the mode of supply;
- European Health Insurance card, where used in the destination country (Appendix 5);
- safety card with the "Do and Do not" for the mode of transport required (Appendices 6 - 9); and
- fact sheet covering the safe use of oxygen therapy (Appendix 10).