Estates and Facilities Alert

Reference **NHSE/I - 2020/0002** Issued **06 April 2020**

OXYGEN USAGE

Summary

Every patient requiring O2 on wards draws on the Oxygen storage tank. With hospitals now treating a large proportion of their inpatients for COVID19 infection, the draw is exceptionally high. The result is that some hospitals are drawing more oxygen from their tanks than the maximum flow for which they were designed.

This carries the risk of icing that could cause flow to drop unexpectedly, compromising supply to patients and/or permanent damage to the system.

It is critical that only approved guidance is followed to achieve maximum sustainable flow from existing installations. Unapproved procedures may cause permanent damage, and there may be no spares available to repair.

Your Trust will have an Approved Person and Authorising Engineer for Medical Gasses: it is critical that clinicians and managers engage with their engineers in order to safely look after their patients and plan their surge capacity.

Regional leads should manage the location of care for patients that require oxygen demand through close collaboration with individual hospitals, and ensuring this is considered when planning mutual aid (i.e. transfers between hospitals to increase capacity for patient care). This will help to ensure that critical oxygen systems are not damaged, compromising patient safety and the whole hospital.

- **Please action oxygen alarms if they are triggered.**
- **Ensure that there are cylinders available to replace piped oxygen supply in the case of an emergency**
- **Please ensure that you plan ahead, including the potential for moving patients out of your hospital, if your system is nearing capacity.**

Professor Ramani Moonesinghe, National Clinical Director, Critical Care

Professor Andrew Menzies-Gow, National Clinical Director, Respiratory Medicine

Mr Adrian Eggleton, National Estates Operational Lead and Covid-19 NHS Estates Lead

ACTION

Action by

- CEOs,
- Medical Directors,
- Critical Care Directors and
- Respiratory and acute medicine directors
- Estates and Facilities Directors
- Directors of Nursing
- EPRR Leads
- Chief Pharmacists

Deadlines for action

Actions underway: 07 April 2020
Actions completed: 10 April 2020

References

- Advice on Pipework pressure and vaporisation.pptx
- Increased Demand on Medical Oxygen Systems March 2020_FINAL_2.1.pdf

Both on the CAS alert.

Enquiries

Enquires should be addressed to: yasmin.whyte1@nhs.net please DO NOT SUBMIT QUERIES through the Central Alerting System as we are unable to manage this flow at the moment.

For queries about clinical use of NIV, CPAP and HFNO in COVID-19 see https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/

Reporting adverse incidents in England

Defects or failures should be reported on this system: http://efm.hscic.gov.uk/

The web-based D&F reporting system is managed by the NHS Digital on behalf of NHS Improvement. For further information on this system, including obtaining login details, please contact the efm-information Helpdesk. Tel 0300 123 2106.

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