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Clearinghouse No.308381	FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	
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<b>Transporting Oxygen on School Buses</b>		

December 23, 1993

TO: Transportation Directors  
ESE Administrators

FROM: Alexandra H. Robinson  
ESE Transportation Coordinator  
DOE/Seminole County Schools

SUBJECT: Transporting Oxygen on School Buses

We have recently received many questions and concerns regarding the transportation of oxygen and related equipment on school buses and the use of such equipment by students during the bus ride. The following suggested procedures should eliminate any confusion in this area; however, after reviewing the items below, please feel free to telephone me for any matters needing clarification.

**Definition**

Oxygen is a non-flammable substance that is stored in liquid or gas form and is used by a student to aid in breathing, and in many cases, in treating an ongoing medical condition. It is always a prescribed medication and will be considered medical support/needed equipment for a student just as any other auxiliary device, (ie., wheelchair, walker, etc.).

**OXYGEN CAN BE SAFELY TRANSPORTED ON A SCHOOL BUS  
WITH PROPER PLANNING AND SECUREMENT**

**Procedures/Guidelines**

1. Information regarding a student’s use of oxygen must be documented on the student’s IEP (Individual Education Plan). It is suggested that a district transportation department representative be present at the IEP meeting, and be informed and involved during such planning stages.
2. Prior to initial transportation, personnel at the school and the transportation department should be informed as to the type and size of the oxygen tank that will be transported. It is recommended that an emergency plan be in place in the event of a medical emergency or equipment failure.
3. If a student is only using the oxygen on an “as needed” basis, it is **not** recommended that the bus operator or attendant be responsible for making the decision as to what is necessary. This is the responsibility of trained medical personnel only.
4. The oxygen should be housed in a portable unit which should be under 15 pounds total weight. It is the local districts’ responsibility to determine who will load and unload the medical support equipment. The districts would also need to provide appropriate training for these procedures.
5. Gas oxygen tanks are cylinders that come in various sizes and are labeled as “MEDICAL E” tanks. “MEDICAL E” tanks are not larger than 22 cubic feet capacity, are approximately 4 1/2" in diameter, and weigh less than 12 pounds. They are usually not more than 31" tall.

6. Liquid oxygen units come in portable containers that are smaller than the gas tanks. Most such units are less than ten pounds and are no more than five inches in diameter. Liquid oxygen units are not more than 13 inches tall. In order to transport these units they **must not be larger** than 38 cubic feet.
7. Oxygen tanks should be secured to the sidewall of the school bus in a rack or mounting that will sustain at least five times the weight of the tank. This type of securement can be built in-house or secured through gas or welding supply companies.
8. All oxygen tanks (gas or liquid) must be secured and kept away from intense heat or friction, since it is under pressure and could accelerate a fire.
9. In those cases where support equipment is attached to the wheelchair, it is suggested that the equipment be removed and secured as recommended above prior to transport.
10. All oxygen should have valves and regulators that have protection against breakage; manufacturer's precautions (usually indicated on a label on the cylinder) should be taken whenever possible.
11. Transportation departments should not be responsible for storing any of the aforementioned equipment, and it is recommended that only one medical support device per student be transported at a time.
12. Any change in medical equipment, or change in transportation as a related service must be changed on the IEP. Sufficient notice should be given to the transportation department so that there is no interruption of services to the student.
13. Other than the items mentioned, there is no need to alter the school bus in any other way in order to accommodate the oxygen. It is **not** necessary to place any placards or labeling on the vehicle; however, a sticker indicating that medical support equipment is in use could be helpful to emergency personnel in the unlikely event of an accident.
14. It is suggested that a contingency procedure be developed in conjunction with garage personnel to avoid oxygen being transported without proper securement in the event the regular bus breaks down.

**SUPPORT EQUIPMENT SHOULD NEVER BE LOCATED IN THE HEAD IMPACT ZONE.**

The above information should hopefully guide your district in developing safe and consistent oxygen procedures. Enclosed are the results of a telephone survey taken of all Florida districts; the information is accurate as of December 10, 1993.

Once again, please contact me with any questions. My office is located at the Seminole County Public School Transportation Services Department - (407) 327-3890.

AR/ef

Enclosure - not enclosed as data was prepared in 1993

cc: Superintendents  
Walter McCarroll  
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Driver Trainers  
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