

# The Pulmonary Press



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**We wish you the special gifts of this holiday season:  
Peace, Joy and Lasting Happiness**

## **That's the Ticket!**

It is often hard to find time to breathe when you are getting ready for a trip, but it should be your Number 1 priority if you are dependent on oxygen. Fortunately, you can travel almost anywhere with a portable oxygen concentrator (POC), provided you plan ahead.

This guide covers some basic tips for oxygen travel, but you should contact your oxygen provider and travel provider's special services department to get their specific requirements ahead of time.

**On the road** In your own car, you can easily power your POC using a DC adapter. If traveling by bus, give at least 48 hours notice, and if you're planning to catch the train, provide a minimum of 12 hours notice. Oxygen equipment, including oxygen concentrators, cannot rely solely on train-provided electrical power, according to Amtrak. Any device brought on a train must be able to operate a minimum of four hours without available onboard electrical power.

**Up in the air** Provide the airline with a physician's statement specifying your oxygen needs. It should describe your medical necessity for oxygen during all or only portions of the flight, your flow rates, your ability to

understand and respond to device alarms, and the POC's model name or number.

Be sure your POC meets the airline's requirements and is approved by the Federal Aviation Administration. Call the airlines at least 48 hours prior to departure, ask if they offer seats near a power outlet, and remember to pack extra batteries in your carry-on bag along with power adapters.

Allow extra time for security and the flight crew to screen your POC. On the plane, use your POC in accordance with the directions in your physician's statement.

**Out at sea** If you're heading for the high seas, make sure to get approval from your cruise line four to six weeks in advance. Bring a letter from your physician that states your needs, a brief medical history, and approval for travel. You will provide your own oxygen equipment, so find out if it must follow any specific rules.

You can plug your POC into an outlet in your cabin, relying on battery power for activities outside of your room. Ask the cruise line to identify electrical outlets in the ship's dining and entertainment areas so you can save on battery power.

If you keep these tips in mind, your next getaway will be smooth sailing!

*National Railroad Passenger Corp., FAA, Greyhound Lines Inc., and Breathin' Easy*

### Hot Stat:

#### Today's Homes Burn Faster Than Ever

It may sound like a cliché to trot out fire safety tips before the holiday season, but if there is one statistic that bears repeating, it's this: Even with adequate smoke alarms, a house fire today can become uncontrollable in less than 3 minutes.

That's down from an average 17 minutes in 1975 -- a whopping 82 percent difference.

It is not how old the home is, it is the furnishings, according to the Fire Safety Institute. The worst culprit in home fires is upholstered furniture, because it often contains highly flammable polyurethane foam. These all-too-common materials provide the fuel for what fire experts call the flashover -- the point at which everything in the room simultaneously bursts into flames. It doesn't help that many of today's homes are built with more open floor plans and modern building materials like wallboard that can lead to faster fires.

In 2010, there were roughly half as many residential fires as in 1977, thanks in large part to the widespread use of smoke detectors. But the incredible speed with which home fires can spread in today's homes represents a major step backward in fire safety.

Think about how you would quickly evacuate your residence in the event of a fire.



**What can I do if the Original Medicare plan (Part A Hospital Insurance or Part B Medical Insurance) says it**

**won't cover an item/service that I think should be covered?**

The Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) you receive from the company that handles claims for Medicare will tell you if Medicare has paid your medical claim or denied it. If your medical claim is denied and you believe Medicare should have covered it, you can request a redetermination (first level appeal). The MSN will explain how to file an appeal.

“Health may be defined as the quality of life that renders the individual fit to live most and to serve best.”

*Jesse F. Williams*