

Preparing for Emergencies Involving Home Oxygen

Emergency Management
Simcoe County

Stay prepared during emergencies or disasters that may cause power outages or delays in oxygen supply restocking

- **Consult your oxygen provider** about available backup options in the event of a power outage. Request a demonstration on how to safely switch from an electrically powered unit to your backup supply. Write down the steps or ask for printed instructions or pamphlets, if available.
- **Understand your backup equipment**. Backup options typically include oxygen cylinders of various sizes for portability and use during power outages or equipment malfunctions. An oxygen-conserving device may also be used with cylinders to extend supply duration.
- **Check equipment regularly**. Periodically test backup systems (e.g., ensure tanks are full, regulators are functioning, and battery backups are charged if applicable).
- **Keep a written emergency plan**. Include your prescribed flow rate, backup procedures, key contacts (oxygen provider, healthcare provider, emergency services), and equipment instructions in one accessible place.
- **Plan for at least 72 hours of oxygen supply.** Calculate the amount of oxygen you will require for a minimum 72-hour period. Your oxygen provider may be able to assist you with these calculations. Below is a table with rough estimates for common tank size duration times.

Flow Rate (LPM)	"D" Cylinder	"E" Cylinder
0.5	13 hours	22 hours
1	7 hours	11 hours
2	3 hours	5 hours
3	2 hours	3 hours
4	1.5 hours	2.5 hours
5	1.4 hours	2 hours
6	1 hour	1.5 hours

Using backup options such as battery-powered oxygen concentrators can help to conserve and prolong the use of oxygen tanks during extended power outages.

- **Monitor weather and outage risks.** Stay informed about approaching weather systems or other potential causes of power outages. This allows time to check your oxygen supply, ensure equipment is functioning, and obtain additional backup supplies if needed.
- **Follow oxygen safety precautions.** Keep oxygen equipment away from flammable materials and sources of ignition, including radiators, furnaces, open flames, and candles. Store backup oxygen tanks indoors within a temperature range of **–20°C to 51°C**.

Information Sourced From: Ontario Ministry of Health & The American Lung Association