

UPON ARRIVAL

The way from the plane to the arrival hall works similarly as during departure, just often without another security check.

There are very few cases where you can easily find a way to refill your POB directly upon arrival (such as at the airport medical centre or at a pharmacy).

In case you require medical oxygen, make sure that someone is waiting for you at the arrival hall with a filled oxygen bottle.

OXYGEN CHECKLIST

- 1 Book your tickets at least two weeks prior to departure
- 2 Check on the FAA website if your POC is approved by FAA
- 3 Book special assistance for departure and arrival
- 4 Specify the medical equipment you need or carry
- 5 Download and fill in the airline's Medical Form
- 6 Visit your physician to get the Medical Form signed
- 7 Send your Medical Form to the airline at least 3 days before departure
- 8 Get the airline approval to fly and bring a copy on your travel
- 9 Get the airline special assistance confirmation and print it out
- 10 Have the name and model of your medical equipment at hand
- 11 Make sure you have enough batteries and a spare cannula at hand
- 12 Bring nasal spray, to prevent dry nasal mucosa
- 13 Carry this leaflet with you

ENCOUNTERING PROBLEMS

Are you experiencing difficulties booking your ticket and flying with your oxygen treatment? We can guide you through the process.

We are collecting passengers' experiences to change the situation and enable air travel with oxygen.

Contact us! projects@efanet.org • ☎ +32 (0)2 2272713



For more information about travelling with medical oxygen, please visit:

- [1] IATA standard medical form:
<https://www.caa.co.uk/docs/923/IATA%20MEDIF%20FORM.pdf>
- [2] POCs approved by FAA:
https://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/cabin_safety/portable_oxygen/
- European Commission mobile application on passenger rights:
http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/passenger-rights/index_en.htm
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) information on portable oxygen:
https://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/cabin_safety/portable_oxygen/
- European national authorities responsible for passengers with reduced mobility that travel by air:
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/air/doc/prm/2006_1107_national_enforcement_bodies.pdf



This leaflet has been produced by the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA), with the support of EFA's COPD Working Group.

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Are you going on a trip and you need to have medical oxygen therapy on-board?



This document will guide you to take the necessary precautions to have a pleasant journey, from airport and airline procedures, towards a safe arrival.

PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

→ Inform the airline about your oxygen needs

Travelling with medical oxygen?

- Send a Medical Form at least 3 days before travelling to the airline's Medical Assistance or Customer Service Team. The Medical Form must be signed by a physician.
- Give notice at least 48 hours prior to departure that you need to travel with on-board oxygen.
- Bring a copy of the Medical Form of the Airline dully signed, together with your ticket, to the airport [1].

Medical Forms inform airlines about the special requirements necessary to accept passengers [1]. In the case of on-board oxygen or on-board use of an oxygen concentrator, passengers are requested to present their medical clearance before flying.

→ Specify and book the equipment you need

While booking your flight, you can apply for special assistance to move about the airport. You need to request this service at least 48 hours prior to departure to your airline or travel agent, who will then pre-notify the airport of your request.

If you do not receive a confirmation from the airline of the special assistance you need, contact your airline or travel agent to check with them if special assistance is available at the airport of departure and destination, and ask them to send you a confirmation of the special assistance you need. If special assistance is not available you may need to make alternative arrangements.

→ Avoid last-minute confusions

You need to provide correct and clear information about the portable medical equipment you will use during your flight.

Portable Oxygen Bottle (POB)

A POB contains oxygen supply in liquid form, or as a compressed gas. There are different sizes, shapes and styles of POB.

The majority of airlines refuses to transport POBs filled by passengers themselves. If you rely on the use of a POB, you will need to ask the airline to provide medical oxygen.

Most of the airlines do not allow passengers to carry their own filled oxygen cylinder, neither in cabin or carrier cabin, but you can take an empty oxygen bottle as luggage.

Portable Oxygen Concentrator (POC)

A POCs is an electronic device that concentrates the oxygen already present in the air to deliver oxygen at 90%-95% purity. These machines do not store oxygen supply and are powered by lithium-ion batteries or electricity. The majority of European Commercial airlines do not allow on-board use of electricity; therefore the passenger has to carry own batteries. Please check on the airline website, to make sure that it does not impose restrictions regarding the battery supply allowed for carry-on. If you travel with a POC, make sure to have the name and model of the device at hand.

POC devices that have been approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are allowed as cabin baggage in Europe. On the FAA's website, you can find an "Airborne Equipment Certificate" for these devices. If your POC is listed there, EFA recommends to carry a copy of the corresponding certificate [2].

If a POC is not sufficient, you will need to ask to the airline to provide medical oxygen.

Lithium Batteries

The majority of European Commercial airlines do not allow on-board use of electricity therefore the passenger has to carry own batteries, covering 150% of their travel time, including transit time, as follows:

- Transporting lithium batteries in medical devices in checked and carry-on baggage, with the approval of the operator, is permitted if the lithium content lies between 2 and 8 grams and the watt-hour rating lies between 100Wh – 160Wh.
- Spare batteries can only be carried as carry-on baggage when they are individually protected, to prevent short circuit (placing each battery in a separate plastic bag).

Depending on the airline, there may be stricter requirements. Passengers should ask the airline or travel agent about any other rules that may apply, including battery supply allowed for carry-on.

Nasal Cannula

Nasal cannula is a set of soft, lightweight tubes placed in the nostrils and used to deliver oxygen to the patient from an oxygen supply. Make sure you carry a spare nasal cannula when travelling.

UPON DEPARTURE

Airports are responsible for the progress of passengers through the airport until they are seated in cabin, and for handling luggage. The provision of medical services on the ground is not the responsibility of the airport.

At the airport, you will go through the following services:

1 Checking-in Counter: *Ground airline staff or subcontractor of the airline.*

The staff will have received pre-notification that you are approved for the flight – only if you have sent the Medical Form at least 48 hours prior to departure.



2 Special Service Counter: *Airport staff or airport subcontractor.*

Following your booking request at least 48 hours prior to departure, your airline or travel agent is responsible to pre-notify airport special service staff to transport you and your handling luggage, together with your POC free of charge, to your cabin seat.



3 Security checks

Show your signed Medical Form to inform security staff that you are approved to move around the airport with a POC or pre-ordered medical oxygen.

 If security staff request you to switch off your POC or to stop Medical Oxygen Delivery, inform them that this is the same as asking you to stop breathing and there is no existing regulation that requires you to do so!



4 Airplane:

Airline staff will be pre-notified of your POC use or need for medical oxygen. Most airlines want you to share in the costs for on-board oxygen service and these costs can vary from one airline to the next. Therefore check with your travel agency before booking.

 If airline staff request you to switch off your POC or to stop Medical Oxygen Delivery, inform them that this is the same as asking you to stop breathing and there is no existing regulation that requires you to do so!

