



**RESOLVED**

# Patient Safety Alert

Status  
Resolved



## Obstruction of oxygen flow possible when using humidifier bottles

The PSA originally issued on 10 Oct 2013 is now considered resolved because:

- The equipment is no longer in use
- The identified hazard no longer exists/ has been significantly reduced
- New policy is now in place
- Professional Practice Notice issued

### Zone Application

Provincial



North



Edmonton



Central



Calgary



South



### Date Resolved:

25 Aug 2016

Patient Safety Alert  
IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED

ALERT

10 October 2013

**Obstruction of oxygen flow possible when using humidifier bottles**

**The Issue**  
It is possible to create an incomplete connection with oxygen tubing when using humidifier bottles, resulting in the partial or complete obstruction of oxygen flow to the patient. The reporting and learning system indicates this is a hazard in all zones regardless of the model of humidifier bottle being used.

**Action**  
All impacted sites, programs and services are to designate an individual by 1500hrs Oct 15, 2013 and email their name and contact information to [SafetyAlert@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:SafetyAlert@albertahealthservices.ca). The designated individual will coordinate completion of the following:

1. Post this alert where oxygen cylinders, humidifiers and tubing are stored and other locations where it will be readily visible
2. Discuss and demonstrate humidifier bottle connection issue with all staff using the product.
3. **Ensure the connector is turned until you can no longer turn it.** Using clean hands secure the humidifier bottle by threading connectors all the way to the bottom to fully puncture the bottle. This may require additional force/turns so that the connection looks like the photo with the arrow pointing to it, below. **Verify the bottle has been fully punctured.** Unscrew the bottle and visually inspect that the bottle has punctured and then reconnect the bottle. You should see bubbles in the humidifier bottle and feel the oxygen at the outlets of the cannula, mask or tent. **Warning!** It is possible to see bubbling in a partially punctured humidifier bottle and still not deliver the needed oxygen.

**For action by:**

Nurses

LPNs

Physicians

Respiratory Therapy

EMTs and Paramedics

**For the information of:**

Patient Care Managers

Site Managers

Clinical Nurse Educators

Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy

**Contact:**

Yang Pham, Manager, Respiratory Services, South Health Campus  
[yang.pham@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:yang.pham@albertahealthservices.ca) or 403-977-1335

Patient Safety will follow up with the designated individuals to determine additional support requirements and confirm local implementation.

Further information about this and other Patient Safety Alerts and Safer Practice Notices can be found on Insite: <http://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/3383.asp>

### Action

- Please remove the original PSA from bulletin boards

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<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/patientsafety>