



College of Respiratory  
Therapists of Ontario

Ordre des thérapeutes  
respiratoires de l'Ontario

# REMOVAL OF OXYGEN FROM A CLIENT'S HOME

Practice FAQs

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## QUESTION

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I work for a home care company and have a client who is on a high litre flow and who continues to smoke while wearing his oxygen. He has been warned numerous times, both verbally and in writing, about the dangers to both himself and those around him (he lives in a small apartment building). However, he refuses to stop. My company says that the oxygen equipment must now be removed, but I am concerned what will happen when we take him off such a high flow. What should I do?

## ANSWER

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The needs of the client must be balanced against the potential risk their actions pose to themselves and others. Provided those risks have been clearly articulated to the client, along with the consequences if he fails to take the necessary actions to avoid the risks, then your home care company is within its rights (and, it can be argued, has an obligation) to remove the oxygen. At the time the oxygen is removed, the client must be advised to seek immediate attention at his local emergency department.

Most home care companies have clear organizational policies outlining the progression of steps to be taken to warn clients of the risks of smoking when receiving oxygen therapy, and what will happen if they don't stop. It is best if these warning are in writing.