

# MHA writes to States to give special attention on keeping the supply of Medical Oxygen smooth and hassle-free across the country

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As part of maintaining smooth supply of essential items in the country, Union Home Secretary, Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla has written to all State Chief Secretaries to give special attention on keeping the supply of medical oxygen smooth and hassle-free. It has been emphasized upon as there is a critical need to maintain adequate supply of medical oxygen in the country in the wake of COVID-19 Pandemic and as medical oxygen is also included in the national list and WHO's list of essential medicines.

Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had issued consolidated guidelines on the lockdown measures to be taken by Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, State/Union Territory Governments and State/ Union Territory Authorities for containment of COVID-19 epidemic in the country, on 24.03.2020 and further modified on 25.03.2020, 26.03.2020, 02.04.2020 and 03.04.2020.

Within the consolidated guidelines, manufacturing units of medical devices, their raw materials and intermediates; manufacturing units of their packaging material; transportation of essential goods and medical supplies and mobilization of resources, workers and material for augmentation and expansion of hospital infrastructure have been permitted. Further, in the communication to all States on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2020, detailed guidelines have been issued for smooth functioning of supply chain of exempted items, involving inter-state movement of employees.

In view of the above, the Home Secretary has reiterated and clarified the **exceptions** under various clauses of the consolidated guidelines on lockdown measures include the following:

- **All manufacturing units** of Medical Oxygen Gas/Liquid, Medical Oxygen Cylinders, Cryogenic Tanks for storing liquid Oxygen, Liquid cryogenic Cylinders, Liquid Oxygen Cryogenic Transport Tanks, Ambient vaporisers & Cryogenic valves, cylinder valves & accessories;
- **Transportation** of above items;
- **Cross land border movement** of above items;
- **Workers** of above mentioned manufacturing units and their transportation should be allowed/ given passes to travel from their homes to factories & back to ensure **factories are run on full installed capacity**.

The communication emphasizes that social distancing and proper hygiene practices must be ensured in each of the above activities, as specified in the lockdown measures. It will be the responsibility of the head of the organization/establishment to ensure compliance of such norms. The district authorities have been asked to ensure strict enforcement. Further, the communication stresses that District authorities and field agencies may be made aware of the above for strict compliance, especially with reference to supply of medical oxygen.

**VG/SNC/VM**

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