

Media release

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BPR Medical secures licence to sell life-saving oxygen firebreak in Japan

BPR Medical's Firesafe™ cannula valve, which can prevent patient deaths and limit injuries in the event of an oxygen fire, has been licensed for use among Japan's 160,000 home oxygen patients.

Thousands of patients who rely on oxygen to alleviate the symptoms of respiratory diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) are killed or injured every year in fires that could have been extinguished by a simple firebreak. The Firesafe cannula valve, an inexpensive device that lasts for up to four years, is placed in the oxygen tubing or cannula. A built-in thermal valve stops the flow of oxygen in the event of fire spreading down the oxygen tubing.

Marketing authorisation for the bidirectional Firesafe™ cannula valve as a Class II device in Japan was achieved through a partnership with BPR Medical's distributor in Japan, Taiyo Nippon Sanso Corporation.

Richard Radford, Managing Director, BPR Medical, said, "It's an unfortunate fact that up to half of home oxygen patients continue to smoke despite warnings and advice about the inherent dangers. Everyday household items, such as birthday candles, gas ovens and electrical devices, can also pose a risk to patients on oxygen therapy.

"The United Kingdom led the way by making the use of firebreaks mandatory in oxygen concentrator installations in 2006, and since then there has been an increasing recognition of the potential life-saving benefits of these devices in other parts of the world.

"The licence to market the Firesafe™ cannula valve in Japan is an important step forward in ensuring oxygen patients across the globe are afforded the same protection from fire as those in the UK and Germany where they are fitted as standard."

Firebreaks are mandatory in the European Union and are a standard requirement on certain devices elsewhere in the world. The new European Medical Device Regulations, enacted on 26th May 2017, clarified that a firebreak device is required on all oxygen modalities, including oxygen concentrators, gaseous cylinders, and liquid oxygen Dewars and devices. Despite this, provision of firebreaks in Europe remains inconsistent.

For more information on firebreaks and the law visit www.firebreaks.info

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Notes to editors:

Oxygen fire statistics

- It is estimated that between 14% and 51% of home oxygen users continue to smoke, putting themselves, their families, neighbours, as well as their property at risk.

Source: Cooper, B. (2015). "Home Oxygen and Domestic Fires". Breathe, 11(1), pp.5-12.

- Up to 80 people are thought to be killed and over 1,000 injured in home oxygen fires in the US alone every year. However, the real figure may be much higher.

Source: Ahrens, Marty (April 1, 2013). "Home Structure Fires". National Fire Protection Association.

- One in four oxygen fires spread causing damage to entire properties.

Source: Wolff, B. K.; et al. (July 11, 2016). "Flash Burns While on Home Oxygen Therapy: Tracking Trends and Identifying Areas for Improvement". American Journal of Medical Quality. doi:10.1177/1062860616658343.

About Firesafe™ Cannula Valve

An increased risk of fire is an unfortunate and all too common problem associated with oxygen therapy. Firesafe™ devices help reduce this risk by isolating the oxygen flow and extinguishing a fire tracking back along the oxygen delivery tubing.

Firesafe™ devices can be installed directly in the oxygen delivery circuit and at the interface with the oxygen supply equipment, providing the following benefits:

- Reducing the rate at which the fire spreads and the potential impact on other residents, patients or healthcare workers
- Preventing fire reaching the supply source
- Minimising the size of the fire and the cost of restoration
- Buying valuable time to evacuate people from the scene

About BPR Medical

Since 1990, BPR Medical has been an international leader in the design and manufacture of medical gas therapy solutions. The company has a reputation for innovation, quality, integrity and value is built on successfully providing market-leading products to the NHS and other healthcare providers in the UK and abroad.

In 2012, BPR Medical was honoured with the Queen's Award for Innovation for its Firesafe™ product range.

www.bprmedical.com