Authorization: Nursing Executive Committee

Date Effective: May 1, 2018
Scope: Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses

**Standard of Practice:**
The licensed nurse will administer oxygen when an insufficient amount is available to blood, organs, or tissue.

**Standard of Care:**
The patient can expect to receive oxygen as needed in a safe manner by licensed nursing staff.

**Policy:**
Oxygen is administered by licensed nursing staff to patients requiring oxygen therapy. The need for oxygen in an emergency may be assessed and initiated by licensed nursing staff.

**Procedure for Emergency/Short-Term Oxygen Therapy:**
- Bring the Emergency Cart with O₂ to the scene.
- Turn O₂ on and check cylinder gauge for amount of oxygen.
- If patient is cyanotic, set liter flow at 15 liters per minute with non-rebreather mask, be sure it is inflated, then apply immediately to patient, maintain at 15 liters per minute until ambulance arrives on the scene.
- If patient is not cyanotic, obtain baseline vital signs and O₂ saturation level prior to starting O₂.
- Set liter flow at **6 liters per minute** with facial mask, or nasal cannula non-breather mask.
- Attach facial mask or nasal cannula to flow meter.
- Explain procedure to patient while placing in position of comfort.
- Turn gauge on and run for a few seconds.
- Place on patient and adjust for proper fit.
- Titrate oxygen flow rate upwards as necessary to maintain oxygen saturation greater than 90%.
- Continue to monitor vital signs and O₂ saturation every five minutes until ambulance arrives.

Documentation should include baseline vital signs and O₂ saturation, time O₂ was initiated, method of administration, flow rate, indication for use and patient response, and ongoing vital signs prior to the ambulance arrival.

A person with respirations less than 10 or greater than 24 may be in respiratory distress and may require respiratory assistance.