

Home oxygen fire deaths

An international comparison of fatalities from home oxygen fires: 2013-2017

In 2018 a Freedom of Information request was sent to all local health service organisations (Clinical Commissioning Groups) in England. It requested details of fire incidents and fatalities involving home oxygen in the five years from 2013 and 2017. Nearly three-quarters (73%) responded. We compared the results with the US and Japan.

Home oxygen patient population



Home oxygen fire fatalities per year



Fatalities per 100,000 patients



19x 

There are almost 20 times more home oxygen fire fatalities in the US compared with the same patient population in England.

10x 

There are almost 10 times more home oxygen fire fatalities in Japan compared with the same patient population in England.



Firebreaks (thermal fuses) became **mandatory** in England and Wales.

Other patient safety initiatives, including **patient education** and **risk assessments**, also followed.

The figures suggest that the best practice adopted in England since 2006 – including the universal use of oxygen firebreaks – has a dramatic impact on patient safety.

* Where firebreaks were not universally mandatory

** 1 death was reported among 73% of the patient population (2013-17)

Sources: National Fire Protection Association (US).

NB. US fatality figures are best estimates based on media reports

National Health Service (UK), Japanese Medical Gas Association