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[54] **OXYGEN DELIVERY SYSTEM**

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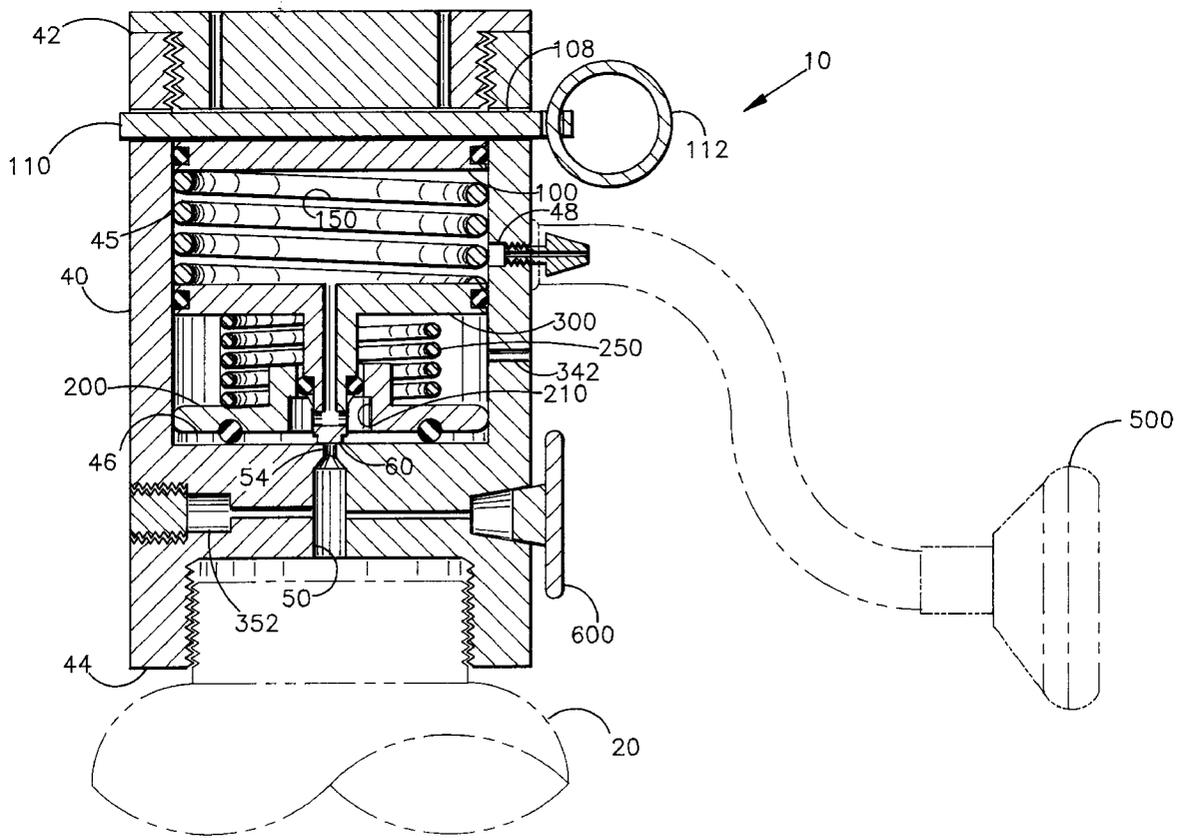
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

An oxygen delivery system provides supplemental oxygen on demand from an oxygen source to a human being via an oxygen mask. The system includes a regulator having an inlet and an outlet. The regulator is removably secured to the oxygen source. A release pin is disposed in the regulator for quickly actuating operation of the regulator. Prior to operation, the release pin maintains the regulator in a closed position so that the regulator prevents the flow of oxygen from the oxygen source. Upon removal of the release pin, the regulator assumes an open position so that it permits the flow of oxygen from the oxygen source, through the regulator, and to the human being. The system is rechargeable and may be carried on the person or stored at home for emergency use.

7 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



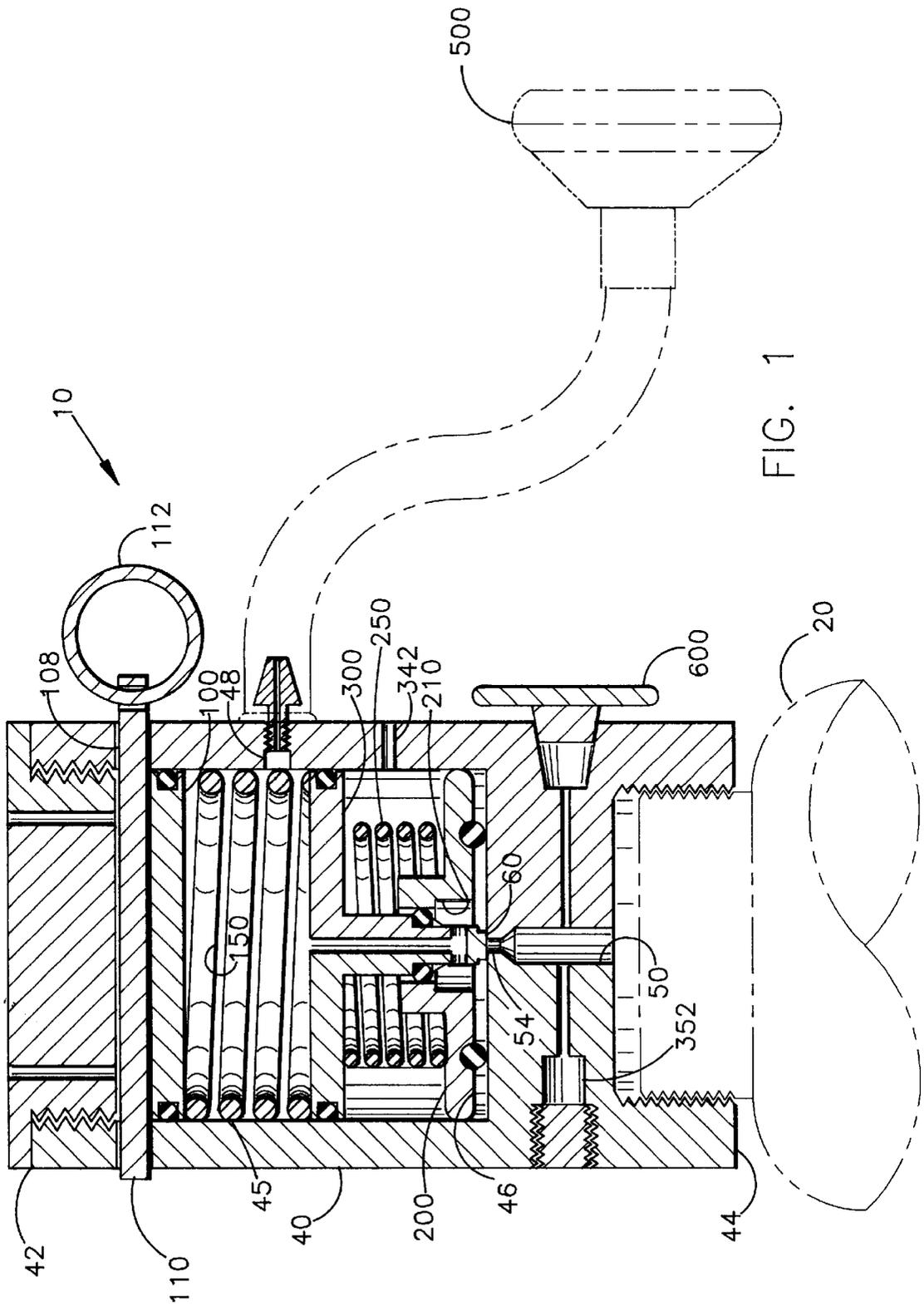


FIG. 1

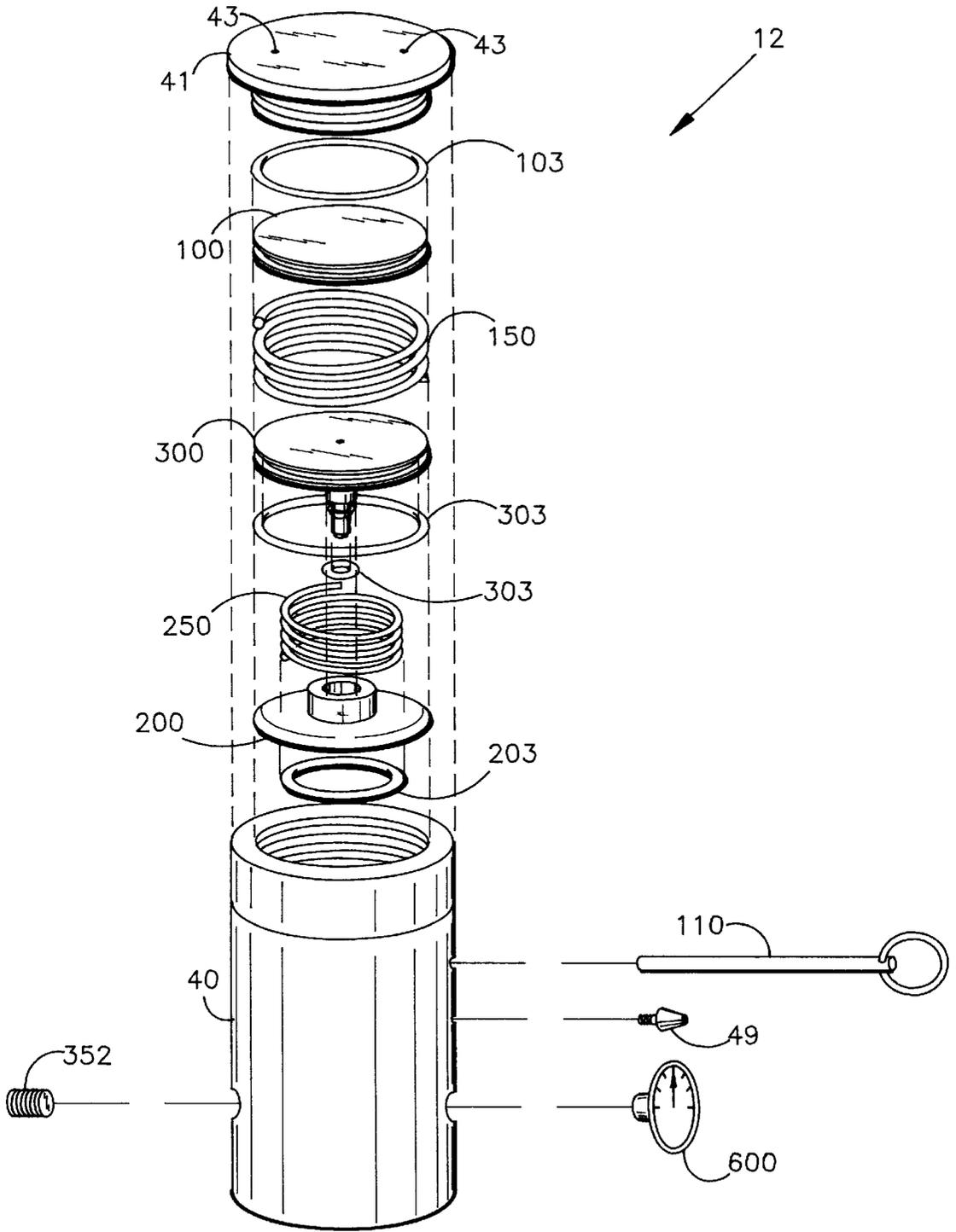


FIG. 3

OXYGEN DELIVERY SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

The present invention pertains to pressure regulators and more particularly pertains to an oxygen delivery system for delivering oxygen on demand from an oxygen source to a human being via an oxygen mask.

Supplemental oxygen is often provided to individuals suffering from pulmonary diseases such as emphysema, bronchitis, and asthma. Supplemental oxygen can also be part of a post-operative regime where it is key to a patient's good health and speedy recovery. Most supplemental oxygen delivery systems operate alike.

Oxygen is delivered from an oxygen source, usually a tank containing pressurized fluid, through a regulator device and to the patient by way of a nasal cannula or face mask. Such devices, however, require professional care and attention to insure proper hook-up and operation. Another problem with present supplemental oxygen delivery systems is that the regulators have complicated pneumatic control systems for regulating the flow of oxygen. These include valves, solenoids, electronic sensors, and diaphragms, each of which adds significantly to manufacturing costs making mass production and sale of these devices cost-prohibitive. Moreover, regulator components become worn over time and may fail to operate. This is unacceptable.

Many of the same problems with oxygen delivery systems heretofore available make them clumsy and impossible to carry on the person as well. Elderly patients having reduced lung function must ride in battery powered carts due to the large oxygen tanks and delivery systems that require electricity to operate.

Another problem is that present oxygen delivery apparatus do not provide for immediate delivery of oxygen in emergency situations where time is of the essence. A time of need may include heart attack, stroke, or a smoke-filled home. Thus, there is a need for an oxygen delivery system, or kit, for use when one is away from the hospital or at home.

Home health care providers and patients could also benefit from a handy, easy-to-operate emergency oxygen delivery system capable of delivering oxygen on demand without the use of electric power. Clearly, an oxygen delivery system of this sort should be portable, reusable, and inexpensive to manufacture.

Therefore, it is highly desirable to provide a new oxygen delivery system.

It is highly desirable to provide a new oxygen delivery system that is easy to operate and that does not require a medical technician to hook-up.

It is also highly desirable to provide a new oxygen delivery system that does not include complicated pneumatic control systems with valves, solenoids, electronic sensors, and diaphragms that may wear out or fail to operate.

It is also highly desirable to provide a new oxygen delivery system that does not need a source of electricity to operate.

It is also highly desirable to provide a new oxygen delivery system capable of delivering oxygen instantly upon demand from an oxygen source to a human being.

It is also highly desirable to provide a new oxygen delivery system that is convenient to carry on the person and is inexpensive to manufacture and use repeatedly.

It is finally highly desirable to provide a new oxygen delivery system that meets all of the above desired features.

SUMMARY

It is an object of the invention to provide a new oxygen delivery system.

It is also an object of the invention to provide a new oxygen delivery system that is easy to operate and that does not require a medical technician to hook-up.

It is another object of the invention to provide a new oxygen delivery system that does not include complicated pneumatic control systems with valves, solenoids, electronic sensors, and diaphragms that may wear out or fail to operate.

It is yet another object of the invention to provide a new oxygen delivery system that does not need a source of electricity to operate.

It is still another object of the invention to provide a new oxygen delivery system capable of delivering oxygen instantly upon demand from an oxygen source to a human being.

It is also an object of the invention to provide a new oxygen delivery system that is convenient to carry on the person and is inexpensive to manufacture and use repeatedly.

It is finally an object of the invention to provide a new oxygen delivery system that meets all of the above desired features.

In the broader aspects of the invention there is provided an oxygen delivery system for delivering oxygen on demand from an oxygen source to a human being via an oxygen mask. The oxygen delivery system includes a hollow body with a top, a bottom, and an interior wall. The interior wall has a bottom surface, and an outlet bore extends through the interior wall.

A first spacer member is sealingly and slidingly positioned within the body. A release pin bore for retaining a release pin extends through the body between the top and the first spacer member. A central bore extends axially through the bottom for providing fluid communication between the oxygen source and the interior of the body. The central bore has an inlet.

A second spacer member is sealingly positioned on the bottom of the hollow body. The second spacer member has an axial bore extending through it.

A metering member is slidingly and sealingly disposed within the body between the first and second spacer members and is axially slidable between a closed position where the metering element seats on the inlet, thereby preventing the flow of oxygen from the source, and an open position where the metering element moves off of the inlet permitting the flow of oxygen from the source into the body.

DRAWINGS

The above-mentioned and other features and objects of the invention and the manner of attaining them will become more apparent and the invention itself will be better understood by reference to the following description of an embodiment of the invention taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a partial cross-sectional view of an embodiment of the invention showing the regulator in its closed position.

FIG. 2 is also a partial cross-sectional view of the invention showing the regulator in its open position with the release pin removed.

FIG. 3 is an elevated perspective view of an embodiment of the regulator of the invention shown disassembled.

DESCRIPTION

FIGS. 1 and 2 show oxygen delivery system 10 of the invention, and FIG. 3 shows the regulator 12 of the inven-

tion. Oxygen delivery system **10** includes regulator **12** comprising hollow body **40** with a top **42**, bottom **44**, and interior wall **45**. Interior wall **45** has bottom surface **46**, and an outlet bore **48** extends through interior wall **45**.

Hollow body **40** is formed from a substantially rigid material that is capable of containing elevated gas pressures from 0.0 p.s.i. up to about 3,000 p.s.i. Thus, body **40** may be formed from a thermoplastic or made from metal so long as body **40** is capable of containing pressurized gas from atmospheric pressure to elevated pressure. The inventor's preferred material is anodized aluminum because it has desirable physical and mechanical properties during and after manufacture.

It should be understood that other metals are suitable, such as brass, aluminum composites, and so on but, the inventor's best mode to date is set forth herein. Additionally, body **40** may be coated using a thin surface layer of high purity aluminum to improve both appearance and corrosion resistance.

Cap **41** with access bores **43** is removably secured to top **42** of hollow body **40** in a gas-tight fashion using known means, such as threads. The bottom **44** of body **40** is also secured in a gas-tight fashion to oxygen source **20**, which is a small oxygen cylinder having a volume of between about 0.75 liters (L) and 3.0 liters (L) at a pressure of between about 2,500 p.s.i. and 3,000 p.s.i.

First spacer member **100** has o-ring groove **102** in which resides o-ring **103**. First spacer member **100** is positioned within body **40** with o-ring **103** sealingly and slidingly engaging interior wall **45**. A release pin bore **108** extends transversely through hollow body **40** between top **42** and first spacer member **100** for retaining release pin **110**. Release pin **110** has ring **112** for the user to grasp. Release pin **110** defines an interface between cap **41** and first spacer member **100** when pin **110** is in release pin bore **108**, as shown in FIG. 1. First spacer member **100** and release pin **110** are formed from the same material(s) as hollow body **40**; and thus, o-ring groove **102** is formed using means known by skilled artisans.

A central bore **50** extends axially through bottom **44** for providing fluid communication between oxygen source **20** and the interior of body **40**. Central bore **50** has inlet **54** with seat **60** at its upper most end.

Second spacer member **200** has o-ring groove **202** in which resides o-ring **203**. Second spacer member **200** is positioned within hollow body **40** with o-ring **203** sealingly engaging bottom surface **46**. Second spacer member **200** has an axial bore **210** extending through it for receiving metering member **300** in cylinder-piston fashion.

Metering member **300** has an o-ring groove **302** formed in its upper portion and in its lower portion in which resides an o-ring **303**. Metering member **300** is disposed within body **40** between first and second spacer members **100**, **200** with the o-ring in its upper portion sealingly and slidingly engaging interior wall **45**. The o-ring in the lower portion of metering member **300** sealingly and slidingly engages interior wall of axial bore **210**. Metering member **300** is axially slidable between a closed position, as shown in FIG. 1, and an open position, as shown in FIG. 2.

Second spacer member **200** and bottom surface **46** and metering member **300** define an inlet chamber **340**. Second spacer member **200** and metering member **300** are formed from the same material(s) as hollow body **40**, first spacer member **100**, and release pin **110**.

With reference to FIG. 2, first spacer member **100** and interior wall **45** and metering member **300** define an outlet

chamber **380**. Outlet bore **48** extends through interior wall **45** at about the mid portion of body **40** and joins outlet chamber **380** with the exterior of hollow body **40**.

A first coil spring **150** is positioned in body **40** for biasing first spacer member **100** and metering member **300** apart, and second coil spring **250** is positioned in body **40** for biasing second spacer member **200** and metering member **300** apart. The respective gauges of coil springs **150**, **250** are selected so that in conjunction with fixed-metered outlet **48**, as will be described below, oxygen is delivered at a substantially constant pressure of between about 20 p.s.i. and 60 p.s.i.

Hollow body **40** also has relief bore **342** for relieving pressure in inlet chamber **340** and refuel bore **350** extending through interior wall **45** at the lower portion of body **40**. Check valve **352** for refueling oxygen source **20** is shown diagrammatically and is secured in gas-tight fashion within refuel bore **350**. A Schrader valve may be used instead of check valve **352**. A pressure gauge **600** for providing a pressure reading of source **20** is coupled to oxygen delivery system **10** using known means.

Referring to FIG. 1, prior to operation, oxygen delivery system **10** is in its closed position. Metering member **300** seats on seat **60**, thereby preventing the flow of oxygen from source **20**. In operation, the user holds delivery system **10** grasping ring **112** connected to release pin **110**. Release pin **110** is pulled from its interface position in bore **108**. This actuates regulator **12** and begins a chain of movement within body **40**.

Once pin **110** is removed, coil spring **150** urges first spacer member **100** to move upwardly in the direction of top **42** until spacer member **100** abuts the bottom of cap **41**, as shown in FIG. 2. This causes coil spring **150** to relax. In response to the relaxing of coil spring **150**, coil spring **250** urges metering member **300** upward in the direction of top **42** and into the open position, whereby metering member **300** moves off of seat **60** permitting the flow of oxygen from source **20**, through inlet **54**, and into inlet chamber **340**. Fluid flows consecutively from inlet chamber **340** into outlet chamber **380** via bores **316**, **314**, as shown in FIG. 2.

When equilibrium of the opposing forces exerted by coil springs **150**, **250** on metering member **300** is achieved, the upward movement of metering member **300** stops so that metering member **300** becomes substantially fixed in the open position. As the user breathes, very slight upward and downward movement of metering member **300** occurs. This movement, however, is constantly corrected as a result of the opposing forces exerted on metering member **300** by coil springs **150**, **250** to maintain substantially constant fluid flow through regulator **12** until source **20** is empty.

Thus, it should be understood that the tolerances between interior wall **45** and metering member **300**, as well as the regulator's specifications, including the thickness of metering member **300** and the gauges of coil springs **150**, **250**, are predetermined such that upward movement of metering member **300** does not obstruct outlet bore **48**.

In this connection, coil spring **150** has a gauge of between about 0.070 and 0.85 inches, and coil spring **250** has a gauge of between about 0.90 and 0.115 inches. These specifications are suitable without excessive experimentation for a regulator like the one disclosed herein having an interior diameter between about 1.00 inches and 1.125 inches.

Additionally, fluid flow out of outlet bore **48** is metered by a predetermined channel **47** formed in a tube fitting **49** that is removably secured within bore **48** in a gas-tight fashion. The above-mentioned tolerances, gauges of coil springs **150**,

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250 and size of channel 47 together determine the flow rate of fluid from outlet chamber 380. A flow rate of between about 5 liters/minute and 15 liters/minute (L/min.) is desirable.

In the event that pressure in inlet chamber exceeds that which is desirable, relief bore 342 provides pressure relief to system 10. For whatever the reason, as pressure increases within inlet chamber 340, metering member 300 continues moving upwardly against the urging of coil spring 150. Upward movement of metering member 300 continues until the seal formed by the o-ring 303 between metering member 300 and second spacer member 200 is breached permitting fluid to flow into hollow body 40 between metering member 300 and second spacer member 200 and out via relief bore 342. Relief bore 342 provides added safety and makes it possible for regulator 12 to be formed from a broad class of inexpensive thermoplastics that would otherwise be unsuitable for containing pressurized gas.

Oxygen delivery system 10 can be refueled by way of check valve 352 and used repeatedly. The system is easy to operate and does not require a medical technician to hook-up, because mask 500 is held over the user's mouth, and the release pin 110 is simply pulled away from bore 108. Quick-release pin 110 also makes new oxygen delivery system 10 capable of delivering oxygen instantly upon demand from an oxygen source to a human being.

Additionally, the sliding members 100 and 300 that are urged in opposite directions by coil springs 150, 250 preclude the need for complicated pneumatic control systems with valves, solenoids, electronic sensors, and diaphragms that may wear out or fail to operate. Moreover, since all its parts are mechanical oxygen delivery system 10 is inexpensive to manufacture and does not need a source of electricity to operate. Since oxygen delivery device 10 uses a small high-pressure oxygen cylinder 20 as an oxygen source, the system is convenient to carry on the person, too.

While a specific embodiment of the invention has been shown and described herein for purposes of illustration, the protection afforded by any patent which may issue upon this application is not strictly limited to the disclosed embodiment, but extends to all structures and arrangements which fall fairly within the scope of the claims which are appended hereto.

What is claimed is:

1. An emergency oxygen delivery system for delivering oxygen on demand from an oxygen source to a human being via an oxygen mask, the oxygen delivery system comprising:

- a regulator device having an inlet and an outlet, said regulator further comprising a hollow body having a

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top, a cap removably secured to said top, and a bottom, a first spacer member, a second spacer member, and a metering member, positioned in said body, said metering member being axially movable between an open position and a closed position;

means for removably securing said regulator to said oxygen source; and,

manual actuating means disposed in said regulator for quickly actuating operation of said regulator, said manual actuating means further comprising a release pin bore for retaining a release pin extending through said regulator,

wherein prior to operation, said actuating means maintains said regulator in a closed position, whereby said regulator prevents the flow of oxygen from said oxygen source, and upon actuating said manual actuating means, said regulator assumes an open position, whereby said regulator permits the flow of oxygen from said oxygen source, through said regulator, and to a human being.

2. The oxygen delivery system of claim 1 wherein said release pin bore being formed in said body such that said release pin defines an interface between said cap and said first spacer member when said pin is in said release pin bore.

3. The oxygen delivery system of claim 1 wherein said first spacer member being slidably and sealingly positioned in said body, said second spacer member being sealingly positioned in said bottom of said body, and said metering member being slidably and sealingly positioned in said body between said first and second spacer members.

4. The oxygen delivery system of claim 1 wherein said second spacer member having a central bore axially extending therethrough for receiving said metering element.

5. The oxygen delivery system of claim 1 further comprising relief valve means for relieving pressure in said body.

6. The oxygen delivery system of claim 1 further comprising a coil spring positioned in said body for biasing said first spacer member and said metering member apart, a second coil spring positioned in said body for biasing said metering member and said second spacer member apart, a pair of access bores extending through said cap for accessing said first spacer member, wherein said first spacer member being movable downwardly relative to said top so that said release pin may be positioned in said release pin bore, thereby defining said closed position.

7. The oxygen delivery system of claim 1 further comprising refuel valve means for refueling said oxygen source.

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