

*Oxygen production facilities in Vietnam could produce 1,300 tons a day and double their capacity if needed, according to the health ministry and several businesses.*



Nguyen Van Phuong, production director of Messer Vietnam Industrial Gases in the southern province of Binh Duong, on Monday said the firm had recognized oxygen production to be an "especially important field whose supply chains need to be protected," even before the coronavirus situation became as complex as it is today.

In anticipation, the company began to stockpile oxygen while improving its production system and deploying Covid-19 control measures to keep operations running, Phuong added.

Messer is one of the largest oxygen manufacturers in the south, which produces around 500 oxygen tanks a day and provides them to medical facilities in Binh Duong, Ho Chi Minh City, Long An, Tien Giang and Can Tho, among others. The firm is also expected to install large oxygen tanks at hospitals and ICUs intended for Covid-19 treatment.

"The firm would continue to raise its productivity to twice the current capacity, which translates to around 1,000 oxygen tanks a day, to meet medical facility demand," Phuong said.

To prevent possible coronavirus outbreaks at the production facility, the firm separates its employees into two groups: one responsible for transporting the tanks to medical facilities, and the other for producing the tanks while fulfilling other office and tech roles.

The two groups operate separately while being tested for Covid-19 thrice a day. Anyone who enters and leaves the facility is carefully managed.

Phuong is currently proposing to the Ministry of Health and local authorities to vaccinate all its workers against Covid-19.

Previously, the health ministry repeatedly assured oxygen production capacity in Vietnam could still meet domestic demands. It warned citizens against hoarding ventilators and oxygen tanks as that may cause shortages and prevent access for those who need them the most.

Vietnam is currently facing its toughest Covid situation yet, with 56,479 cases recorded since late April. HCMC accounts for 35,984 of these.

Source: *VNE*