



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

July 26, 2019

Dear Colleague:

This is a reminder that during the summer months health care facilities may experience higher rates of temperature excursions in their vaccine storage units than usual. Here are steps you can take to safeguard your vaccine supply.

I. If your vaccine storage unit is experiencing frequent temperature excursions, your storage unit temperature MAY need to be adjusted.

Temperature adjustments should:

- Be made by the primary or alternate vaccine coordinator, based on information from the digital data logger (DDL) and temperature monitoring log.
- Not be done during a busy workday, or when the unit door is being opened and closed frequently.

Remember that temperatures within any storage unit will vary slightly, even with normal use. Therefore, before making any adjustments:

- Confirm that the unit is securely plugged into a power source.
- Check the temperature inside the storage unit.
- Wait 30 minutes, without opening the door, to allow the temperature to stabilize.
- Check the temperature again to determine if the thermostat should be adjusted.
- If you believe there could be an issue with your DDL, use your backup device to confirm the temperature.

If you confirm that an adjustment is needed:

- Refer to the owner's manual for detailed instructions.
- Make a small adjustment toward a warmer or colder setting by turning the thermostat knob slowly to avoid going outside the correct temperature range.
- Once the adjustment is made, allow the temperature inside the unit to stabilize for 30 minutes without opening the door.
- Re-check the temperature.
- Repeat these steps as needed until the temperature has stabilized at around 5° C (40° F) for a refrigerator or between -50° C and -15° C (-58° F and +5° F) for a freezer.
- Consider placing additional water bottles in the unit to help improve temperature stability.

II. Should you experience a loss of power to your vaccine storage unit, take the following steps:

1. Keep all storage unit doors closed during the power outage to help conserve the cold mass of the vaccines. **DO NOT OPEN THE UNITS TO CHECK/ADJUST THE TEMPERATURE** until power is restored.
2. If possible, continue to monitor temperatures of the storage unit, but **DO NOT OPEN THE UNITS** to do this. If this is not possible, then record the temperature as soon as possible after power is restored. In addition, document the duration of the power outage. This will provide

information about the maximum temperature the vaccine was exposed to and the duration of such exposure.

3. Do not discard any vaccine.

4. If the temperature went out of range during the power outage, when power has been restored, clearly mark these vaccines and do not use them until you are able to consult with the vaccine manufacturers or the Bureau of Immunization (BOI). Continue to store the vaccines at recommended temperatures in the event that they are still viable.

5. Call the vaccine manufacturers at their toll-free numbers for guidance about vaccine use (GSK 877- 356-8368; Merck 877-829-6372; Sanofi Pasteur 800-822-2463; Pfizer 800-505-4426; Novartis 855- 358-8966; MedImmune 877-633-4411). For vaccine supplied by the BOI, you should notify the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program at 347-396-2404 of the determination made by the vaccine manufacturers about the viability of the affected vaccine.

6. If VFC vaccine is determined not to be viable, complete a Temperature Excursion Incident Report (TEIR) and send it to the VFC program via email or fax (indicated on the form), along with supporting documentation from the vaccine manufacturer(s). A fillable TEIR is attached to this notice, along with a sample report. Spoiled vaccine should be reported using the Vaccine Inventory Management (VIM) system in the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR), Online Registry. Once reported, your site will receive a return label to use for your vaccine return.

7. If alternate storage with a reliable power source is available (e.g., hospital with generator power), transfer to that facility can be considered. If transporting vaccine, measure the temperature of the refrigerator(s) and freezer(s) when the vaccines are removed. If possible, transport the vaccine following proper cold chain procedures for storage and handling or try to record the temperature the vaccine is exposed to during transport.

Information about managing vaccine storage during power outages is also available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at:

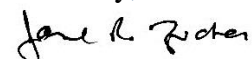
<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/vaccinestorage.html>.

In addition, CDC provides guidance on routine vaccine storage and handling at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf>

If vaccination of a patient is deferred because of vaccine loss, use a log, the CIR or other tracking system to recall your patients once replacement vaccine is available. For assistance with determining whether your vaccines can be used, or for professional or technical questions, please call the BOI at 347-396-2400. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization