

# Vaccine Storage and Handling

## A Guide to CDC VFC Recommendations

*To protect the integrity of vaccine supply and to secure access to vaccine supply provided by federal and state entities, pharmacists should strive to adhere to these recommendations.*

### Staff and Training

- Designate a primary, and a backup, vaccine coordinator.
- Develop and maintain clearly written, detailed, and up-to-date storage and handling standard operating procedures (SOPs) as part of a vaccine management plan (include contact information, staff roles/responsibilities, training, storage, handling, temperature excursions, plan review/ updating).
- Train staff on routine vaccine storage and handling and emergency SOPs.

### Vaccine Storage and Temperature Monitoring Equipment

- **Use purpose-built (pharmaceutical grade) units designed to either refrigerate or freeze.**
  - > **Household-grade units can be an acceptable alternative to pharmaceutical-grade vaccine storage units.** However, the freezer compartment of this type of unit is not recommended to store vaccines and there may be other areas of the refrigerated compartment that should be avoided as well.
  - > Door-style and bar-style (small, single-door combined units) are not allowed.
- Place a storage unit in a well-ventilated room, leaving space between the unit, ceiling, and any wall.
- Temperature Ranges:
  - > Before using a unit for vaccine storage, check and record the minimum and maximum temperatures each workday for two to seven days.
  - > **Maintain refrigerator temperatures between 2°C and 8°C (36°F and 46 °F).**
  - > **Maintain freezer temperatures between -50°C and -15°C (-58°F and +5°F).**
- Every vaccine storage unit **must have a temperature monitoring device (TMD).**
  - > Maintain at least one backup TMD in case a primary device breaks or malfunctions.
  - > CDC recommends (and VFC requires) a specific TMD called a “digital data logger” (DDL).
  - > Use DDL with current and valid Certificate of Calibration Testing which includes the model/ device name or number, serial number, date of calibration (report or issue date), confirmation that the instrument passed testing, recommended uncertainty of +/- °C (+/- 1°F) or less.
  - > Calibration should be completed individually for each DDL every one to two years or according to the manufacturer’s suggested timeline.

## A Guide to CDC VFC Recommendations

### Vaccine Inventory Management

- Immediately examine shipments for signs of damage.
- Order and stock only enough vaccine to meet patient needs.
- Isolate any vaccines stored out of range and contact manufacturer or health department to determine how to handle vaccine.

### Emergency Vaccine Storage and Handling

- Establish a working agreement with at least one alternate facility even if you have a generator as backup equipment.

***For more information on temperature excursions and storage/handling, review the CDC's Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit***

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit-2020.pdf>



**Disclaimer:** Providers are responsible for ensuring compliance with all federal, state, and/or local requirements. This document is a guide and APhA is not liable for additional requirements not listed in this document. Check for additional state requirements prior to receiving, storing and handling vaccines.

