

# Checklist for Safe Vaccine Storage and Handling

Clinic Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are the most important things you can do to safeguard your vaccine supply. Are you doing them all? Review this list to see where you might make improvements in your vaccine management practices. If you check off all boxes below, we give your clinic a pat on the back! If not, assign someone to implement needed changes!

## Establish Storage and Handling Policies

- We have designated a primary Vaccine Coordinator and at least two (2) Back-up Coordinators to be in charge of vaccine storage and handling at our facility.
- Both the Primary and Back-up Vaccine Coordinators have completely reviewed the Vaccine Management Plan Binder.
- We have detailed, up-to-date, written policies for general vaccine management, including policies for routine activities and an emergency vaccine-retrieval-and-storage plan for power outages and other problems. Our policies are based on California Department of Public Health vaccine storage and handling guidance and/or on instruction from SFDPH Immunization Program.
- We review these policies with all staff annually and with new staff, including temporary staff, when they are hired.

## Log In New Vaccine Shipments

- We maintain a vaccine inventory log that we use to document the following:
  - a. Vaccine name and number of doses received
  - b. Date we received the vaccine
  - c. Condition of vaccine when we received it
  - d. Vaccine manufacturer and lot number
  - e. Vaccine expiration date

## Use Proper Storage Equipment

- We store vaccines in refrigerator and freezer units designed specifically for storing biologics, including vaccines. Alternatively, we keep frozen and refrigerated vaccines in separate, free-standing freezer and refrigerator units. At a minimum, we use a household-style unit that is at least 11 cubic feet and that has a separate exterior door for the freezer and separate thermostats for the freezer and refrigerator. We do NOT use a dormitory-style unit (a small combination freezer-refrigerator unit with a freezer compartment inside the refrigerator)
- We use only calibrated thermometers with a Certificate of Traceability and Calibration that are recalibrated as recommended by the manufacturer.
- In the event of a power failure or other unforeseen event we follow the guidelines in the "Emergency Vaccine Management Plan."

## Ensure Optimal Operation of Storage Units

- We have a "Do Not Unplug" sticker next to the electrical outlets for the refrigerator and freezer warning label by the circuit breaker for the electrical outlets in languages of all staff, including janitors and maintenance workers.
- We keep the storage unit clean, dusting the coils and cleaning beneath it every two years.

## Maintain Correct Temperatures

- We use a digital data logger (DDL) with a glycol probe, MIN/MAX setting, and alarm as our primary temperature monitoring device. We manually record temperatures twice daily for our primary thermometer.
- We keep a backup DDL on hand at all times, and store the glycol probe in the refrigerator.
- Both thermometers will be accurate to +/-1°F (+/-0.5°C), and have a Certificate of Traceability and Calibration Testing.  
**Calibration due date for all current thermometers (See sticker on back of most thermometers or calibration sticker):**  
Primary Thermometer(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Backup Thermometer(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- We maintain the refrigerator temperature at 36.0–46.0°F (2–8°C), and we aim for 40.0°F (5°C).

- We keep extra containers of water in the refrigerator (e.g., in the door, on the floor of the unit where the vegetable bins were located) to help maintain cool temperatures.
- We use a digital data logger (DDL) as our primary temperature monitoring device in the freezer.
- We maintain the average temperature in the freezer at 0°F (-18°C), with a maximum temperature of 5°F (-15°C).
- We keep ice packs or ice-filled containers in the freezer to help maintain cold temperatures.

**Store Vaccines Correctly**

- We post signs on the doors of the refrigerator and freezer that indicate which vaccines should be stored in the refrigerator and which in the freezer.
- We do NOT store any food or drink in any vaccine storage unit.
- We store vaccines in the middle of the refrigerator or freezer (never in the doors), with room for air to circulate.
- If we are using a combination refrigerator-freezer unit, we do not store vaccines in front of the cold air outlet that leads from the freezer to the refrigerator (often near the top shelf).
- We check vaccine expiration dates and store vaccines with the closest expiration dates at the front of the refrigerator to ensure they get used soonest.
- We store vaccines in their original packaging in clearly labeled, uncovered containers with slotted sides that allow air to circulate.

**Maintain Daily Temperature Logs**

- On days when our practice is open, we document minimum and maximum temperature readings on the daily log twice a day — first thing in the morning and approximately one hour before our facility closes.
- We consistently record temperatures on the log in either Fahrenheit or Celsius. We NEVER in any way mix how we record our temperatures.
- The Emergency Vaccine Management Plan (pp. 55-58) shows whom to call if the temperature in the storage unit goes out of range.
- When we change the thermostat setting, we document it in the daily log sheet's note section
- If out-of-range temperatures occur in the unit, we document all details in the daily log's temperature excursion page (p. 2).
- We keep the temperature logs on file for at least 3 years.

**Take Emergency Action As Needed**

- In the event that vaccines are exposed to improper storage conditions, we take the following steps:
  - a. We restore proper storage conditions as quickly as possible; if necessary, we move the vaccine to our planned back-up storage unit. We address the storage unit's mechanical or electrical problems according to guidance from the manufacturer or repair service.
  - b. In responding to improper storage conditions, we do NOT make frequent or large changes in thermostat settings. After changing the setting, we give the unit at least a day to stabilize its temperature.
  - c. We temporarily label exposed vaccines "DO NOT USE" and keep them stored at proper temperatures and separate from any unexposed vaccines. We do not use exposed vaccines until the vaccine manufacturer gives us approval.
  - d. We document exactly what happened, noting the temperature in the storage unit, the room temperature, and the amount of time the vaccines were out of proper storage conditions. We contact the vaccine manufacturer and SFDPH Immunization Program to determine how to handle the exposed vaccines.
  - e. We complete a "Storage and Handling Incident Report" and send to the SFDPH Immunization Program immediately.

**Stay Up-To-Date on Staff Training**

- All staff involved with temperature monitoring or other aspects of vaccine storage and handling have:
  - a. Taken the online trainings, "Monitoring Storage Unit Temperatures" and "Storing Vaccines," available at [www.eziz.org/eziz-training](http://www.eziz.org/eziz-training). We have submitted certificates of completion to CDPU for all relevant staff members.
  - b. Thoroughly read the most recent edition of the Vaccine Management Plan, distributed by CDPU.

Vaccine Coordinator Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Backup Coordinator Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Backup Coordinator Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_