



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

California Department of Public Health
Immunization Branch
Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program
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Short-Term Power Outages

Dear VFC Provider,

Stormy weather may result in short-term power outages. Please review the following reminders:

- All vaccines, except Varicella, exposed to short term (< 4 days) temperature excursions **above** the recommended range (36-46°F) that do not exceed 77°F **are not compromised and can be used**. If vaccines are exposed to temperatures in excess of 77°F, contact VFC for direction. This includes all inactivated and live products (except Varicella). If freezer temperatures are compromised, Merck should be contacted directly at 1- 800 489 5119.
- During short-term power outages, vaccine storage units **not** backed-up by functioning generators should remain closed as long as possible to maintain consistent temperatures. All staff should minimize opening units during power outages. If staff needs to open the unit during an outage, limit the number of times the door is opened by combining the products to be taken out at one time. With doors closed, most insulated refrigeration units will remain cool for 24-48 hours.
- **Thermostats should not be manually adjusted** in response to power outages. Any thermostat adjustments should occur after 24 hours of continuous (uninterrupted), closed door operation.
- **Pharmacy and lab grade refrigerator units** are more sensitive to power outages and lose temperature more rapidly if not backed-up by generator power. Please check to make sure all generators are in working order. If these units are not connected to generator back-up power sources, moving vaccines may become necessary if outages exceed six hours.
- **Household grade refrigerator units** are less susceptible to brief power outages because they are insulated. Moving vaccines may become necessary only when continuous, sustained outages exceed 24-48 hours duration.
- During normal monitoring periods (morning and afternoon before closing), above-range temperatures due to power outages should be logged with the term "short-term power outage." Enhanced monitoring is unnecessary.
- If you anticipate a power outage, a few extra water bottles can be put in the vaccine storage unit. Adding water bottles will help keep temperatures stable for a longer time period.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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