

Transferring Vaccines



California COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Transferring vaccines is not a routine event but a response to an emergency or other unplanned event (e.g., excess supply or imminent expiration of doses). Prior approval is not required. The receiving location takes ownership of transferred vaccines and must be an enrolled and approved COVID-19 vaccination provider. Follow these instructions to transfer vaccines.

Key Points

- Sender assumes full responsibility for ensuring receiving provider location is covered by a COVID-19 provider agreement and adheres to its requirements
- Coordinate with the receiving location to ensure they can store and use vaccine doses
- Sender must follow cold-chain procedures in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and guidance in CDC's [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit](#)
- Sender must report transfer event to CDPH within 24 hours of vaccine delivery; receiver must accept the shipment & indicate if vaccines were exposed to a temperature excursion during transport
- Sender and receiving location must ensure updated inventory counts are reflected in their daily reporting to VaccineFinder
- Punctured multi-dose vials may not be transferred to another provider location or across state lines
- Only transfer doses once
- Keep all documents for three years

Before Transferring Vaccine

Transfer of vaccine should be a last resort. Vaccine supply in early phases is limited. To prevent waste and minimize transfers, find individuals that meet current priorities at the provider location or bring individuals to the provider location to be vaccinated. If doses remain, contact your local health department about a transfer so they can use the doses or transfer them to another provider for administration.

Vaccine Transport

Vaccines must be transported following the guidelines in CDC's [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit](#) using appropriate packing materials that provide the maximum protection. Temperatures must be monitored using a digital data logger appropriate to the transport temperatures for the vaccine. Use the [Vaccine Transport Log](#) to track vaccine inventory, temperatures before departure and upon arrival, and chain of custody. Total transport time alone, or transport plus clinic workday, should be a maximum of 8 hours. (See [Transporting Vaccines](#) for details.)

Beyond Use/Expiration Dates by Transport Option

Beyond Use Dates may be reduced by storage method. Plan accordingly to minimize waste.

IMPORTANT: Once Pfizer vials are removed from trays, store or transport at refrigerated temperatures or thaw for use; do not return to frozen storage.

Vaccine Product	Transport Method	Destination Storage Unit	Storage & Handling Details for Unpunctured Vials
Pfizer	Refrigerated (2°C–8°C)	Refrigerator	Frozen doses moved to refrigerated temperatures have reduced Beyond Use Date. Label vaccines with Beyond Use Date of 1 month/31 days max from date first transferred to refrigerated temperatures.
	Frozen (-25 to -15°C)	Freezer	Vaccines may be stored or transported at frozen temperatures for a period of two weeks ; frozen vials may be returned one time to the recommended storage condition of -80°C to -60°C (-112°F to -76°F); vials transported at frozen temperatures can either be returned to -80°C to -60°C and used by the expiration date, or maintained at frozen temperatures and used within two weeks (label vaccines with Beyond Use Date of two weeks from date first transferred to freezer temperatures). (2/25/21)
	Original thermal shipper	Refrigerator	For thermal shippers, limit openings to 2/day for about 3 minutes per opening. Frozen doses moved to refrigerated temperatures have reduced Beyond Use Date. Label vaccines with Beyond Use Date of 1 month/31 days max from date first transferred to refrigerated temperatures.
	Original thermal shipper	All doses transported and will remain in original Pfizer thermal shipper	Doses may be stored in thermal shippers for up to 30 days from delivery (if dry ice is recharged within 24 hours of receipt and every 5 days after initial icing). If entire shipper is redistributed, label vaccines with Beyond Use Date of the remaining number of days (out of 30) doses may be stored in the shipper.
	Original thermal shipper	ULT freezer	Doses stored till expiration . Expiration dates are on the vials.
	ULT transporter *	ULT freezer	Doses stored till expiration . Expiration dates are on the vials.
Moderna	Frozen -50° to -15°C **	Freezer	Frozen transport -50° to -15°C (-58° to 5°F) is preferred; doses may be stored till expiration . Scan QR code for expiration date.
	Refrigerated (2°C–8°C)	Refrigerator	Refrigerated transport (2° to 8°C; 36° to 46°F) more than once for up to 12 hours total; use Beyond Use Date labels to track reduced shelf life of up to 30 days from date first transferred to refrigerated temperatures.
Janssen	Refrigerated (2°C–8°C)	Refrigerator	Doses stored for 3 months . Scan QR code for expiration date.

* While CDC does not recommend transporting ultra-frozen vaccine, if necessary, this vaccine may be transported in a portable ultra-cold freezer that can maintain a temperature of -80° C.

** Use of dry ice may subject vials to temperatures colder than -50°C (-58°F).

Resources

Resources can be found on EZIZ's [COVID-19 Vaccine Management Resources](#) website.

- CDC's [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit](#) & Addendum
- [Transporting Vaccines](#)
- [Vaccine Transport Log](#)
- [Pfizer Beyond Use Date \(BUD\) Tracking Label \(Refrigerator\)](#)
- [Pfizer Vaccine Storage and Handling Label](#)
- [Moderna Beyond Use Date \(BUD\) Tracking Label \(Refrigerator\)](#)
- [Moderna Vaccine Storage and Handling Labels](#)
- [Transporting Janssen Vaccine](#)
- [Janssen Vaccine Storage and Handling Labels](#)

Instructions

Follow these instructions to transfer vaccines to another enrolled and approved COVID-19 provider location.

Step	Description
1.	Contact your local health department's Immunization Coordinator to confirm receiving location is an enrolled and approved COVID-19 vaccination provider. (First time only.)
2.	Contact receiving location to confirm they can store and use the doses before expiration. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notify receiver that they will receive a confirmation of transfer and must accept the transfer in myCAvax.
3.	Determine how many vaccine vials will be transferred.
4.	Record Beyond Use Dates (reduced expiration dates) or expiration dates on the Vaccine Transport Log so receiving location will know when doses must be properly disposed. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See <i>Beyond Use/Expiration Dates by Transport Option</i> table above to determine BUD or expiration dates; see Resources for product-specific labels.
5.	Follow your organization's protocols for packing and transporting vaccines. If Pfizer thermal shipper is transferred and doses will remain in original shipper <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete the Vaccine Transport Log including temperatures prior to transport; include last re-ice date so receiving location will know when to recharge dry ice.• Drive (don't ship) vaccines with transport log to the destination location.• Open the windows on your vehicle while transporting dry ice for ventilation.• Place vaccines in the main compartment—not in the trunk.

	<p>If packing/transporting vaccines in transport container</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow guidance in CDC’s Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit. • Complete as much of the transport log(s) as you can. • Set up the data logger(s). <p>Remove vaccines from storage unit and pack for transport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove vials quickly but carefully. (For transfers from Pfizer thermal shipper, limit opening to about 3 minutes. Use a timer.) • Complete the Vaccine Transport Log including temperatures prior to transport. (Vaccine may have QR code to identify lot numbers and expiration dates.) • Ensure the data logger is set up and recording temperatures. • Insert transport log into transport container before sealing. • Drive (don’t ship) vaccines to the destination location. • Ideally, limit total transport time to a maximum of 8 hours.
6.	Transport equal amounts of vaccines, diluents, and ancillary supplies (including vaccination record cards and PPE).
7.	<p>Contact the receiving location to confirm delivery and ensure doses were stored properly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that vaccines were not exposed to out-of-range temperatures (or any temperature excursion was reported). • Confirm location understands they must accept the transfer in myCAvax and updated inventory must be reported to Vaccine Finder.
8.	<p>Sender must login to myCAvax and click on Vaccine Inventory to report the transfer to CDPH within 24 hours of vaccine delivery to receiving location. (Use the Transfer/Redistribution button.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The receiving location will receive an email notification of the transfer and must login to myCAvax and click on Vaccine Inventory to accept receipt of the vaccines. (Use the Transfer/Redistribution button.)
9.	Sending and receiving locations must ensure updated inventory counts are reflected in their daily reporting to VaccineFinder’s COVID Locating Health provider portal.