

Transporting Vaccines



California COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Vaccines should not be routinely transported. If transport is necessary, vaccines must be transported following guidelines in CDC's [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit](#) using appropriate packing materials that provide the maximum protection. Temperatures must be monitored using a data logger appropriate to vaccine transport temperatures. Total transport time alone, or transport plus clinic workday, should be a maximum of 8 hours, or manufacturer's guidance if it is different.

Key Points

- Providers can designate any trusted individual with a general understanding of vaccine storage and handling and transport protocols; designee does not need to be a licensed healthcare provider
- Use the [Vaccine Transport Log](#) to track vaccine inventory, temperatures before departure and upon arrival, and chain of custody
- Consider using the [Transport Time Tracker](#) to ensure total transport time alone, or transport plus clinic workday, doesn't exceed a maximum of 8 hours
- Transport equal amounts of vaccines, diluents, and ancillary supplies (including vaccination record cards and PPE)
- Procure a sufficient supply of materials needed for vaccine transport of your largest annual inventory; do not use commercially available soft-sided food or beverage coolers

Transport Equipment

Vaccines may be transported using a portable vaccine refrigerator with a data logger placed with the vaccines. (If a portable vaccine refrigerator is not available, use qualified containers and pack out.)

General Transport System Recommendations	Emergency Transport	Transport for Off-Site Clinic, Satellite Facility, or Relocation of Stock
Portable Vaccine Refrigerator, Freezer, or Ultra-cold Freezer	Yes	Yes
Qualified Container and Packout	Yes	Yes
Conditioned Water Bottle Transport System	Yes	No
Manufacturer's Original Shipping Container	Yes (last resort only)	No*
Food/Beverage Coolers	No	No

*The original shipping container for ultra-cold COVID-19 vaccine can be used for transport.

Qualified Container & Pack-out

These products are specifically designed for use when packing vaccines for transport. They are passive containers that do not require a power source and are "qualified" through laboratory testing under controlled

conditions to ensure they achieve and maintain desired temperatures for a set amount of time. For example, PCM refrigerated or frozen vaccine transport container.

Soft-sided containers specifically engineered for vaccine transport are acceptable. Do not use commercially available soft-sided food or beverage coolers because most are poorly insulated and likely to be affected by room or outdoor temperatures.

IMPORTANT: Hard-sided insulated container or Styrofoam™ is only to be used in an emergency. Use in conjunction with the Packing Vaccines for Transport during Emergencies tool.

Coolants for Transport

Phase change materials (PCMs) at 4°C to 5°C (39°F to 41°F) can also be purchased to maintain proper temperatures. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use to reduce the risk of out-of-range temperatures during transport. Do not use frozen gel packs or coolant packs from original vaccine shipments to pack refrigerated vaccines. (Guidance to follow for Moderna vaccine.)

Digital Data Loggers

Vaccine transport containers must be monitored using a digital data logger that meets the specifications and features in CDC's [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit](#). Only use data loggers with a current and valid Certificate of Calibration Testing. Neither CDC nor CDPH endorses specific brands.

For routine transport: Data loggers using buffered temperature probes (e.g., a probe buffered with glycol, glass beads, sand, or Teflon®) provide the most accurate way to measure actual vaccine temperatures.

For ultra-low-temperature transport: Do not use buffered temperature probes. It is essential to use a device with an air-probe or a probe designed specifically for ultra-cold temperatures. (While devices using a buffered temperature probe provide the most accurate measurement of vaccine temperatures, many manufacturers use pure propylene glycol (freezing point -59° C |-74° F) or a glycol mixture with a warmer freezing point.) See CDC's [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit Addendum](#) for details.

Transport Checklist

Vaccines must be transported following product-specific guidelines in CDC's [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit](#) COVID-19 Addendum or [Transporting Janssen Vaccine](#). Key points:

- Vaccines must be transported in a stable transport container that meets CDC's guidelines
- Transport at the appropriate temperature for vaccine products
- Monitor temperatures with a digital data logger when transporting vaccine
- Use the [Vaccine Transport Log](#) to track vaccine inventory, temperatures before departure and upon arrival, and chain of custody
- Consider using the [Transport Time Tracker](#) to ensure total transport time alone, or transport plus clinic workday, don't exceed a maximum of 8 hours

- Transport equal amounts of vaccines, diluents, and ancillary supplies (including vaccination record cards and PPE)
- Transport vaccine in vials; there may be instances requiring transport of pre-drawn syringes
- Do not transport partially used vials from one provider to another, or across state lines
- Do not refreeze vaccine
- Do not use dry ice to transport vaccine (exception for original Pfizer thermal shippers)

Resources

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

- CDC's [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit](#) & Addendum
- [Vaccine Transport Log](#)
- [Transport Time Tracker](#)
- [Transporting Janssen Vaccine](#)

Instructions

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

Step	Description
1.	Determine how many vaccine vials will be transported.
2.	<p>Prepare to transport before removing vaccines from storage units.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete as much of the Vaccine Transport Log as you can. • Set up the data logger(s). (Refer to your vendor user guide or video as needed.)
3.	<p>Remove vaccines from storage unit and pack for transport. (Refer to CDC's Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit for details.)</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 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 and clinic time combined to a maximum of 8 hours.
4.	Transport equal amounts of vaccines, diluents, and ancillary supplies (e.g., record cards and PPE).

5.	<p>Store vaccines properly according to manufacturer recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm that vaccines were not exposed to out-of-range temperatures; report any temperature excursions immediately.
----	---