Redistributing Vaccines

California COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Vaccines should be direct shipped to vaccination settings to minimize breaks in the cold chain. However, there may be circumstances where COVID-19 vaccines need to be redistributed routinely to additional clinic locations (e.g., for orders smaller than the minimum order size, or for large organizations whose vaccines are shipped to a central depot and require redistribution). Upon approval from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), follow these instructions to routinely redistribute 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 receiving locations to redistribute only what is needed to minimize waste
- Sender must ensure validated cold-chain procedures are in place in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and guidance in CDC’s [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit](#)
- Sender must report redistribution events to CDPH within 24 hours of vaccine delivery; report must 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
- Vaccines may only be redistributed from the primary shipping location to secondary sites once
- Punctured multi-dose vials may not be redistributed to another provider location or across state lines
- Keep all documents for three years
- Refer to your Redistribution Vaccine Management Plan and CDC’s Redistribution Agreement for complete list of requirements
Transport Options

Vaccines must be transported following guidelines in CDC’s Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit and COVID-19 Addendum. Beyond Use Dates may be reduced by storage method. Plan accordingly to minimize waste. Vaccine products may be transported using the following transport methods. (For additional details, refer to Transporting Pfizer Vaccine and Transporting Moderna Vaccine.)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine Product</th>
<th>Transport Method</th>
<th>Destination Storage Unit</th>
<th>Storage &amp; Handling Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pfizer</td>
<td>Refrigerated (2°C–8°C)</td>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>Frozen doses moved to refrigerated temperatures have reduced Beyond Use Date. Label vaccines with Beyond Use Date of 5 days/120 hours from date first transferred to refrigerated temperatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original thermal shipper</td>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>For Pfizer thermal shippers, limit openings to 2/day for about 3 minutes/opening. Frozen doses moved to refrigerated temperatures have reduced Beyond Use Date. Label vaccines with Beyond Use Date of 5 days/120 hours from transfer date.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original thermal shipper</td>
<td>All doses transported and will remain in original Pfizer thermal shipper</td>
<td></td>
<td>Doses may be stored in thermal shippers for up to <strong>30 days from delivery</strong> (if dry ice is recharged within <strong>24 hours</strong> of receipt and every <strong>5 days after initial icing</strong>). 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original thermal shipper</td>
<td>ULT freezer</td>
<td>Doses stored in ULT freezer expire in 6 months. Scan QR code on vial trays to determine expiration date.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULT transporter * (-80°C)</td>
<td>ULT freezer</td>
<td>Doses stored in ULT freezer expire in 6 months. Scan QR code on vial trays to determine expiration date.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderna</td>
<td>Frozen (-25 to -15°C)</td>
<td>Freezer</td>
<td>Doses stored in freezer expire in 6 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated</td>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>Refrigerated transport/delivery limited to 12 hours. Use a qualified, purpose-built vaccine transport container and a digital data logger. Must be placed back in refrigerator after transport.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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.

Redistribution of Moderna Vaccine Doses

Modern vaccine may be shipped directly to sites in volumes of 100 doses per carton. Given the smaller shipment size compared to other vaccines, CDC recommends that each site administering vaccine receive a direct shipment. However, CDC recognizes that redistribution of vaccine may be required in some instances. Based on information to date from
the manufacturer, immunization planners should consider the following general principles for Moderna vaccine redistribution.

**Thawed Vaccine**

- Once a vial of vaccine has been thawed, it may be stored refrigerated at 2-8°C for up to 30 days.
- Once thawed, the vaccine cannot be re-frozen.
- When thawed, the vaccine should be handled with care and protected from shocks, drops, vibration, etc.

**Transport**

Vaccine being transported at temperatures others than frozen (-15 to -25°C) should begin with the vaccine in the frozen state if at all possible. If you must transport vaccine that has already been thawed, follow these general principles in [Transporting Moderna Vaccine](#).

**Redistribution of Pfizer Vaccine Doses Using Thermal Shippers**

Pfizer thermal shippers maintain ULT temperatures if openings are limited to 2/day for about 3 minutes/opening. Deliveries may need to be scheduled over multiple days depending on the number of receiving locations. Plan redistribution accordingly.

This is a site that leverages either an ultra-low-temperature freezer (ULTF) for storage or Pfizer’s thermal shipper to redistribute vaccine to additional locations. The ULTF has a higher degree of flexibility in shipment size and time intervals than the Thermal Shipper. It also offers the least amount of complexity for handlers as they can store without the need for dry ice.

- The hub-and-spoke model offers the option for hubs to distribute shipments based on fluctuating vaccination needs
- Redistribution logistics are a key factor in redistribution to local sites (e.g., redistribution transport containers)
- Hub sites will need to account for dividing up the ancillary supplies kit, which is shipped separately from Pfizer’s thermal shipper

**Examples:**

- Large Health System Redistributing with ULTF Hubs - Closed to Broader Community Vaccination
- Urban Medium Health System Redistributing with ULTF Hubs - Closed to Community Vaccination
- Temporary Site with a Fridge Receiving Distributed Vaccine from a Local ULTF Hub – Open to Broader Community Vaccination
- Urban ULTF Hub Redistributing Vaccine for Long-term Care Staff with a Strike Team – Closed to Broader Community Vaccination
- Rural Thermal Shipper Site Redistributing Vaccine for Healthcare Workers at Small Clinics with a Strike Team – Closed to Broader Community Vaccination
### Capacity Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Planning Inputs</th>
<th>Input Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Population Size</td>
<td>Appointments or some sort of scheduling will be key for this archetype to accurately forecast redistribution frequency and valid amounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling Strategy</td>
<td>ULTF or Thermal Shipper. For redosing, they must be refrigerated at 1°C to 5°C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Storage Option</td>
<td>Only fully thaw trays can be shipped from one ULTF to another ULTF. If individual vials are redistributed, they must be stored at 1°C to 5°C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Full-time Immunizers</td>
<td>Dependent on expected vaccine recipient throughput and availability of trained staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstitution Strategy</td>
<td>Depending on the number of immunizers on staff, may need to reconstitute in batches with nurse support or each immunizer could be responsible for their own reconstitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaccine Recipients per hour (per immunizer)</td>
<td>Estimate 6 vaccine recipients per hour (per immunizer) – 10 min per vaccine recipient but may vary based on waiting room capacity, nurse support for preparing the vaccine vs. another HCP administering, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Vaccine Recipients Served Per Day</td>
<td>Vaccine recipients per hour per immunizer multiplied by the number of full-time immunizers multiplied by the hours of operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Vials Needed Per Day</td>
<td>Each vial contains 5 doses. Expected Vaccine Recipients Served Per Day divided by 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Operation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of the Week in Operation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resources

Resources will be posted to EZIZ’s [COVID-19 Vaccine Management Resources](#) as they become available.

- CDC’s [Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit](#)
- [Vaccine Transport Log](#)
- [Reporting Vaccine Redistribution or Transfer](#) e-form
- [Transporting Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [Transporting Moderna Vaccine](#)
- [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](#)

### Instructions

Once CDPH has granted authorization to redistribute vaccines, follow these instructions to routinely redistribute vaccines to another enrolled and approved COVID-19 provider locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Contact your local health department’s Immunization Coordinator to confirm receiving location is an enrolled and approved COVID-19 vaccination provider. (First time only.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Contact receiving location to confirm they can receive the doses; redistribute only what is needed to minimize waste.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Determine how many vaccine vials will be redistributed for each receiving location.
   - **For Pfizer:** Shippers may only be opened 2/day for 3 mins/opening. If distributing vials from the same thermal shipper to multiple sites, plan deliveries accordingly. (See Redistribution of Pfizer Vaccine Doses Using Thermal Shippers graphic above.)

4. Record any Beyond Use Dates (reduced expiration dates) on the Vaccine Transport Log so receiving location will know when doses must be properly disposed. (See Resources for labels.)
   - Frozen Pfizer doses transferred to refrigerated temperatures have **reduced Beyond Use Date (BUD).** Label vaccines with BUD of 5 days/120 hours from date first transferred to refrigerated temperatures.
   - Pfizer 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.
   - Pfizer doses transferred in ULT transporters and stored in ULT freezer have **expiration date** of 6 months. Scan QR code on vial tray to determine expiration dates.
   - Moderna frozen doses have **expiration date** of 6 months. Details pending FDA approval.
   - Frozen Moderna doses transferred to refrigerated temperatures have **reduced BUD.** Label vaccines with BUD of 30 days from transfer date. Details pending FDA approval.

5. Follow your organization’s protocols for packing and transporting vaccines as recorded in your Redistribution Vaccine Management Plan.

**If Pfizer thermal shipper is redistributed and doses will remain in original shipper**

- 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.

**Packing/transporting vaccines in transport container**

Follow guidance in CDC’s [Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/). (For additional details, refer to [Transporting Pfizer Vaccine](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/transport/pfizer-vaccine.html) and [Transporting Moderna Vaccine](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/transport/moderna-vaccine.html).)

- If redistributing vials to multiple sites, pack separate containers to minimize openings.
- Complete as much of the transport log(s) as you can.
- Set up the data logger(s).

Remove vaccines from storage unit and pack for transport.

- Remove vials quickly but carefully. *(For transfers from Pfizer thermal shipper, limit opening to about 3 minutes. Use a timer.)*
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</table>
| • Complete the Vaccine Transport Log including temperatures prior to transport. *(For Pfizer vaccine, scan QR code on vial trays to identify lot numbers and expiration dates. For Moderna, scan the QR code located on the vial or carton.)*  
• 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) for each receiving location. |
|   | 7. Contact the receiving location to confirm delivery and ensure doses were stored properly.  
• Confirm location completed the transport log (temperatures upon arrival) and filed with their records.  
• Confirm that vaccines were not exposed to out-of-range temperatures (or any temperature excursion was reported).  
• Confirm location understands when vaccines will expire (Beyond Use Date or Expiration Date).  
• Confirm location understands update inventory must be reported to Vaccine Finder. |
|   | 8. Redistribution entity must complete and submit the *Report Vaccine Redistribution or Transfer form* to CDPH within 24 hours of vaccine delivery to receiving location. |
|   | 9. Sending and receiving locations must ensure updated inventory counts are reflected in their daily reporting to VaccineFinder’s *COVID Locating Health* provider portal. |