

Preparing for your cold chain inspection

Ensure all your staff are trained on proper vaccine storage and handling guidelines. Use this checklist as a quick guide to help prepare for your annual vaccine fridge inspection.

Contact KFL&A Public Health's immunization team at 613-549-1232, ext. 1451 or vpd.nurse@kflaph.ca if you have any questions.

Training your staff

- Assign staff members as the primary and back up cold chain contacts. These individuals will support your staff by ensuring access to all cold chain related materials required and be the contact for KFL&A Public Health.
- Ensure staff read the Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines and ensure a hard copy is always available on site.
- Ensure staff are aware of your site's contingency plans for power outages as well as vaccine fridge and equipment malfunctions.
- Ensure staff are aware of how to properly document fridge temperatures and report out of range temperatures.

Contingency planning

- Ensure your site has a documented and known contingency plan that can be implemented in the event of equipment malfunction, power outage, or other emergencies.
- Partner with another KFL&A Public Health approved vaccine site who could assist with temporary storage of your vaccines if needed.
- Ensure an appropriate cooler with a working maximum and minimum thermometer and ice packs is on site.

Refrigeration

DO store vaccines in:

- Purpose built vaccine refrigerators (ministry preferred).
- Domestic, stand-alone, refrigerators (with modifications to ensure stability).

DO NOT store vaccines in:

- Domestic bar size refrigerators with a contained freezer (separate freezer is allowed).

Domestic bar size refrigerators are not recommended because they are more challenging to maintain stability.

- Ensure your refrigerator is in an area away from direct sunlight, external walls, and in a space with that has good air flow.
- Ensure your refrigerator is plugged into an outlet that is not easily accessible, or has a ministry "Do not unplug" sticker beside the outlet.
- Ensure your refrigerator is plugged into a generator outlet when possible.
- Ensure your refrigerator is serviced regularly and maintained in good working condition, with adequate door seals and locks.
- Ensure your refrigerator is kept clear of dust and debris that could interfere with the unit's fan or temperature regulation.

Vaccine storage

- Keep vaccines organized by product in their original boxes to protect from light damage.
- Organize products by expiration dates to ensure short-dated vaccines and red dotted vaccines are used first.
- Ensure your refrigerator is not overpacked with vaccines. Ministry guidelines state that no more than one month's supply should be on hand at any time.
- Do not store vaccine in the doors or drawers of the refrigerator.

Temperature monitoring device

- Ensure you are using a temperature monitoring device that meets the criteria outlined in the Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines.
- Use of a data logger (preferred) or digital maximum and minimum thermometer with the ability to measure in 0.1 degree increments.
- The device's temperature sensor must be placed in the most central location of the refrigerator to ensure accuracy.
- Batteries of the device must be changed every six months to ensure optimal functioning.
- The device should be tested annually to ensure accuracy.
- Set the devices alarm to report at three and seven degrees celsius.

Temperature documentation

Twice daily temperature documentation is required.

- Record at the beginning and end of each day.
 - Recording must include accurate time of documentation, date, temperature readings for current, and maximum and minimum.
 - Reset the maximum and minimum between every reading.
- Ensure the temperatures are maintained between two and eight degrees celsius.

Managing cold chain incidents

- Contact KFL&A Public Health for all cold chain incidents where the temperature goes below two or above eight degrees celsius.
 - Report by phone at 613-549-1232, ext. 0 to report a cold chain break.
 - After hours reporting is available.
 - Reports cannot be left on voicemail.
- Implement contingency plans if the fridge remains unstable.