

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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**Immunization Program**

**TO: All Health Care Providers**  
**FROM: Mick Bolduc-Vaccines For Children (VFC) Coordinator**  
**DATE: January 26, 2015**  
**SUBJECT: Winter Storm**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mick Bolduc".

The primary purpose of this communication is to ensure that your facility is prepared for the impending winter storm that is forecast to hit Connecticut beginning tonight.

**Emergency Preparedness Checklist**

With a major winter storm scheduled to make landfall over Connecticut tonight all providers, if they have not already done so, should take a moment to review their storage and handling practices with all relevant staff. Each practice should have a back-up protocol for vaccine recovery (see attached). Providers should take all steps necessary to safeguard the viability of their vaccine **before** the winter storm hits. **Such steps include having a back-up generator on site in case power is lost, or making arrangements with a facility (local hospital, pharmacy, fire station, another practice, private residence etc.) to temporarily store vaccine that has a back-up generator.** Make sure your continuously recording thermometer is working correctly and has paper to record the temperature in the unit. If you do have a power outage and do not have a back-up generator, do not assume the vaccine is no longer viable. Instead, record the date, time and temperature and contact the Immunization Program so that we can work with you to determine if the vaccine is still good to use. Remember do not discard or administer affected vaccines until you have discussed the viability of such vaccine with the Immunization Program. We appreciate you and your staff taking the necessary time to safeguard all vaccines in your possession and minimize any vaccine loss.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Immunization Program at (860) 509-7929.

# Connecticut Immunization Program

## Recommended Back-up Protocol for Vaccine Recovery

<b>PRACTICE NAME:</b> _____	<b>PIN #:</b> _____
<b>CITY/TOWN:</b> _____	<b>PHONE NUMBER:</b> _____
<b>PERSON COMPLETING FORM:</b> _____	<b>DATE:</b> _____

**The Back-up Plan must be reviewed annually and updated whenever personnel responsible for vaccines change. Please record the date in the space to the right each time the form is reviewed.**

Date		Initials
/	/	
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/	/	

This document offers guidance for developing a vaccine disaster recovery plan. Included are steps to follow when your refrigerator or freezer malfunctions due to mechanical failure or natural disaster. *If you have any questions about vaccine transportation or stability call (860) 509-7929.*

### I. Vaccine Recovery Plan

#### A. Designated Person(s)

Designate a Vaccine Coordinator and a Back-up person within your practice to:

- Monitor the operation of the vaccine storage equipment and systems daily;
- Track inclement weather conditions. Set up and maintain a monitoring/notification system during times of inclement weather or other conditions that would create a shut down in power. An alarm/notification system is recommended for practices with an inventory or \$5,000 or more;
- Assure the appropriate handling of the vaccine during the disaster or power outage.
- Ensure procedures are in place to notify the Vaccine Coordinator and/or Back-up person if power is lost and that they have access on weekends and off hours.

Names of designated employees:

NAME	TITLE	HOME PHONE

## B. Back-Up Systems

If you do not have a back-up generator, identify a location with one. This may be the local hospital, pharmacy, fire station, another practice, or an employee's home.

- Make arrangements with the site to store your vaccine there when weather predictions call for inclement conditions (severe ice/snow storms, hurricanes etc.) and when your vaccine storage equipment cannot be fixed or the power cannot be restored within 6 hours.

Document the location(s), contact person and phone number of your back-up system/generator:

Location Name/Phone #	Contact Person	Home Telephone Number

- Determine if your refrigerator is having a mechanical failure (no lights in the refrigerator, no fan noise, etc.) or if the building has lost electrical power. Check with building maintenance to ensure that the generator is operational and has been activated. If a time-frame for the restoration of electrical power cannot be determined, contact your back-up location for temporary storage of vaccine.
- In situations where a location with a back-up generator cannot be identified within a reasonable distance, preparations should be made to have coolers, and frozen ice packs available to temporarily and safely store your vaccine.

## C. Transport of vaccine

- **Conduct an inventory before you transport vaccine.**
- **Package vaccine in a well-insulated container with ice packs.**
- Insulate refrigerated vaccine from direct contact with the ice packs by wrapping vaccine packaging in newspaper, bubble wrap, or a similar material. Do not expose refrigerated vaccine to freezing temperatures.
- Remember that varicella and MMRV vaccine must be kept frozen between -58°F and +5°F (-50°C to -5°C) and should be packaged separately from other vaccines (with the exception of MMR vaccine, which can be either kept frozen or refrigerated). Use of dry ice to transport varicella and MMRV may subject the vaccine to temperatures colder than recommended and should not be used.

#### **D. Staff Training/Posted Information**

Post your Vaccine Recovery Plan on or near the vaccine storage equipment. Ensure that all staff (current and new) read the plan and understand it as part of their orientation

#### **E. Large Practices and Medical Centers**

If you are a very large practice or a medical center, and have large quantity of vaccine, consider joining with other practices and rent a refrigerated truck to transport or store your vaccine. Have the name and telephone number of a local refrigeration company available. You will need to monitor the temperature of the refrigerated truck until you can get your vaccine safely returned to your office.

<b>Refrigeration Company(s)</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>Contact Person and Home Telephone Number</b>

### **II. THINGS TO DO NOW...BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!**

- A.** Complete this plan and update as staff changes occur. It will only take a few minutes and may save you hours of work later, not to mention our federal and state tax dollars.
- B.** Fill the empty spaces in your refrigerator with jugs of water and line the sides and bottom of your freezer with ice packs. In the event that your refrigerator/freezer is out of order, this exercise will help maintain the temperature for a longer period of time.

### **III. IT IS IMPORTANT TO CUSTOMIZE A BACK-UP PLAN RELEVANT TO YOUR PRACTICE!**

#### **IV. HELPFUL HINTS**

- A.** Fill a cup with water and put it in the freezer containing vaccine; once the water has frozen put a penny or paper clip on top of the frozen water. If you find the object has been frozen over you'll know the temperature rose above freezing at some point in time. This is especially helpful over a holiday weekend or school break.
- B.** Use the blinking light of a digital clock or microwave as an indicator that power was lost some time during closing hours.