

Chief Health Officer advice to doctors in flood affected areas

18 January 2011

Status: Active

Vaccine cold chain management strategies for a power outage

In preparation for a power outage

1. Gather equipment to manage breach:
 - Ice bricks wrapped in bubble wrap or newspaper
 - Esky
 - Min/max thermometer or data logger
 - Bubble wrap, thick cardboard or a blanket and tape for fridges with a glass door.

When the power goes off

1. **Ideally** vaccine should be transferred to another **temperature monitored** fridge (eg. your local hospital) under cold chain conditions. Transfer the vaccine in an esky with ice bricks wrapped in bubble wrap or newspaper so that the ice bricks are not in direct contact with the vaccine packaging.
2. Alternatively:
 - leave the vaccine in the fridge that has lost power with the door closed, or
 - transfer vaccine to an esky with ice bricks and bubble wrap, provided the temperature can be measured with a min/max thermometer or data logger.
3. When vaccine is left in the fridge:
 - place ice bricks in the spare space in the fridge **away from direct contact** with vaccine packaging
 - a fridge with a glass door should be covered with either bubble wrap or thick cardboard or a blanket and taped down
 - place a note on the door of the fridge "**Do not use vaccine or open fridge until further notice**"
 - lock the fridge if possible.

After the power outage resolves

Record the minimum and maximum temperatures on the electronic display, data logger or min/max thermometer. Then reset the temperature as usual.

1. Contact the Immunisation Section, Department of Health on 1300 882 008 to ask for the cold chain breach (CCB) forms to be faxed to your facility or download the forms at:
www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/provider-forms/cold-chain-forms
2. Complete the CCB forms and return to:
 - Fax 1300 768 088
 - Email: immunisation@health.vic.gov.au
3. **Do not use vaccine or discard vaccine until advice is received.**

For any other queries please call the Immunisation Section, Victorian Department of Health on 1300 882 008 (Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm).

Also see the Chief health Officer's advice on [Tetanus-containing vaccine and the treatment of water related infections](#), in the event of penetrating injuries in persons clearing up flood related damage.