

Vaccine service providers

Are you prepared for storm season? Safeguard your vaccines.

It is important to prepare for the storm season which usually occurs between October and March each year. Storms are a common cause of power failure (including power surges, spikes, blackouts and brownouts), which can place your vaccines at risk from temperature fluctuations.

If there is a power failure you may need to transfer vaccines into alternative safe storage, such as a cooler (e.g. Esky™, Willow™ / Coleman™ type solid-walled insulated container). **Domestic refrigerators (including bar fridges) are not designed to store vaccines and must not be used for vaccine storage at any time.**

When moving vaccines to a cooler DO NOT remove vaccines from their original packaging. The packaging provides a buffer around the vaccines which helps prevent damage during transportation, protects vaccine potency by reducing exposure to UV and fluorescent light, and assists to maintain a stable temperature around the vaccine.

Now is the time to check that everything is in place so you can be confident that your vaccines will be safe as possible during storm season!

Remember to refer to the National Vaccine Storage Guidelines “Strive for 5” 3rd Edition for further information.

Do you have the following?

- ☐ Appropriate hard-shell cooler/s, large enough to hold all of your vaccines?
- ☐ Sufficient number of ice/gel packs to pre-chill the cooler prior to use, and additional ice/gel packs to condition or “sweat” (if possible) before packing the cooler?
(NOTE: Frozen bricks can be used but a sufficient amount of bubble wrap MUST be used)
- ☐ Freezer where the ice/gel packs can be stored ready for use?
- ☐ Sufficient packaging material such as polystyrene chips or bubble-wrap, to protect the vaccines from direct contact with the ice/gel packs?
- ☐ Several digital minimum/maximum thermometer/s with a reset button which have had the accuracy checked and the battery changed in the last 12 months?
- ☐ Temperature recording book/chart for each cooler to monitor the vaccine temperature?
- ☐ Written process for managing a power failure, and staff who have completed a trial run, including “how to pack an esky”?

If the answer is no to any of these questions, please refer to National Vaccine Storage Guidelines “Strive for 5” 3rd Edition.

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-vaccine-storage-guidelines-strive-for-5>

or contact the Metro South Public Health Unit: 3156 4000