



## Safety Alert 001/18

### Vaccine storage and cold chain management

9 February 2018

#### Distributed to:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- Regulation and Compliance Unit

#### Action required by:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- Directors of Nursing
- Regulation and Compliance Unit

#### We recommend you also inform:

- Directors of Emergency Departments
- Clinical Managers
- Directors of Pharmacy
- Directors of Public Health
- Infection Control Practitioners

#### Deadline for completion of action

15 March 2018

#### Expert Reference Group

Content reviewed by:

- Chief Health Officer
- Clinical Excellence Commission

#### Health Protection NSW

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Email:  
[hprot@doh.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:hprot@doh.health.nsw.gov.au)

Internet Website:  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs>

Intranet Website  
<http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/>

#### Review date

February 2019

#### Background

Most vaccines used in Australia are temperature-sensitive substances that must be stored between +2°C and +8°C at all times to ensure they work effectively. There may be loss of potency if vaccines have been stored at temperatures outside this range. The Australian Government's *National Vaccine Storage Guidelines - Strive for 5 (2nd ed)* provides recommendations on vaccine storage management

#### Compliance with vaccine storage and cold chain management requirements

All public facilities are required to implement NSW Health policy directive PD2017\_014 *Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Management*, including:

1. All staff responsible for vaccine storage and cold chain management, and their immediate managers, must complete the HETI education module *Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Management* as specified in Section 7 'Education' of PD2017\_014.
2. Continually data log all vaccine refrigerators and if using a portable data logger, place it appropriately in the fridge with the vaccines as specified in 'Strive for 5' and not near the cold air vent.
3. Conduct annual vaccine storage self-audits of all vaccine fridges, including confirmation that all designated staff responsible for vaccine storage have completed the HETI education module, and forward the results to the local public health unit for review and action any recommendations.
4. Notify all cold chain incidents in the Incident Information Management System (IIMS).

#### Further information

Cold chain management resources are available at  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/immunisation-providers.aspx>

Call your local public health unit on **1300 066 055** for any cold chain management queries.

#### Actions required by Local Health Districts/Networks

1. Acknowledge receipt of this safety alert by COB today.
2. Directors of nursing to report on the number and percentage of staff that are designated as responsible for vaccine storage and cold chain management that have completed the HETI education module to their CE by 22 February 2018.
3. Directors of clinical governance to notify the public health unit of any vaccine refrigerators that have a freezer compartment by 12 February 2018 to allow a risk assessment to be undertaken.
4. Directors of clinical governance to ensure that all vaccine fridges have been audited (available on the Quality Audit Reporting System (QARS)) in the last 12 months.
5. With the support of their public health unit and/or pharmacist, directors of clinical governance to review the audit results for each vaccine fridge by 8 March 2018.
6. CEs to confirm outcomes of this review and confirm that 100% of designated staff have completed the HETI module. An LHD report to be forwarded to the Communicable Diseases Branch at [vaccereports@doh.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:vaccereports@doh.health.nsw.gov.au) by 15 March 2018 and subsequently each year