



Safety Notice 001/17

Vaccine cold chain management in NSW Facilities

2 February 2017

Distributed to:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance

Action required by:

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance

We recommend you also inform:

- Clinical Managers
- Directors of Pharmacy
- Directors of Nursing

Expert Reference Group

Content reviewed by:

- Chief Health Officer
- National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance
- Clinical Excellence Commission

Health Protection NSW

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

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

Review date

6 March 2017

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.

Recent cold chain breaches have highlighted the need for staff training, and local procedures to support active cold chain management.

Further information

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

Suggested actions by Local Health Districts/Networks

1. Distribute this notice to all stakeholders, and all clinical departments involved in immunisation.
2. Ensure that:
 - a. policies, procedures and protocols are in place for vaccine management in each facility according to 'Strive for 5'
 - b. all vaccines are stored in a purpose built vaccine refrigerator
 - c. all vaccine refrigerator minimum/maximum temperatures are recorded twice daily on the NSW Health vaccine refrigerator monitoring chart
 - d. all vaccine refrigerators are continually data logged, and that the data logging report is downloaded and reviewed weekly
 - e. a base-line vaccine storage self audit is performed and conducted annually thereafter (available on the Quality Audit Reporting System – QARS)
 - f. plans are in place to respond to cold chain breaches and power failures in each facility, including reporting temperatures outside +2°C to +8°C range to the local public health unit (PHU) on 1300 066 055 within the same working day. Quarantine the vaccines until PHU advice is received
 - g. any cold chain breaches resulting in vaccine wastage or recall and revaccination of patients are reported in the Incident Information Management System (IIMS) to facilitate investigation, resolution and minimise the risk of future incidents
 - h. cold chain management resources are utilised to facilitate staff education