

## Florida Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program Emergency Vaccine Storage and Handling Advisory

With the approach of a hurricane, an interruption of power supply is always an issue of concern. While outages may be brief, they can persist for extended periods. As many of you are aware, power outages have significant implications for vaccine storage. Emergency procedures are vital to protect vaccine in storage and to minimize the potential monetary loss from a hurricane or other potential disaster. The information below will assist in developing these procedures.

**Be prepared to implement emergency procedures *IN ADVANCE***, when the state, local officials or provider has reasonable cause to believe that weather conditions have the potential to disrupt power and/or flood at any office where you store your vaccine.

### **In advance of the emergency:**

- a. Identify of an alternative storage facility (hospital, packing plant, county health department, etc.), with back-up power (generator), where you can properly store and monitor the vaccine for the duration of the storm,
- b. Ensure the availability of staff to pack and move the vaccine,
- c. Ensure the availability of appropriate packing containers, cold packs, and dry ice (for Varicella vaccine) and,
- d. Ensure transport of the vaccine to the secure storage facility.

It is appropriate for providers to suspend vaccinations before weather conditions deteriorate. Allow sufficient time for packing and transporting vaccine ***BEFORE*** the storm can adversely affect local conditions.

You can take other precautions and appropriate measures to protect vaccine inventories using the emergency procedures. The following procedures include some HELPFUL HINTS AND REFERENCE INFORMATION.

### **I. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

#### **A. List emergency phone numbers, companies, and points of contact for:**

1. Electrical power company
2. Refrigeration repair company
3. Temperature alarm monitoring company
4. Perimeter alarm repair company
5. Perimeter alarm monitoring company
6. Backup storage facility
7. Transportation to backup storage
8. Dry ice vendor
9. Emergency generator repair company
10. National weather service

11. Manufacturers

- a. Merck: 800-672-6362
- b. sanofi pasteur: 800-VACCINE (800-822-2463)
- c. Glaxo SmithKline: 800-366-8900
- d. Wyeth Lederle Labs: 800-820-2815

B. Provider/clinic assistance to providers in possession of vaccine

- 1. Identify hospitals, health departments or other facilities that could serve as emergency vaccine storage facilities and communicate this information at the regional or county level and/or with the assistance of Bioterrorism or Emergency Preparedness Units.
- 2. Prioritize assistance and communication to target providers in areas at highest risk, e.g., low lying coastal or floodplain areas.

C. Entering vaccine spaces

Describe, when necessary, how to enter the building and vaccine storage spaces if there is an emergency and the location is closed. Include a floor diagram and the locations of:

- 1. Doors
- 2. Flash lights
- 3. Spare batteries
- 4. Light switches
- 5. Keys
- 6. Locks
- 7. Alarms
- 8. Circuit breakers
- 9. Packing materials

D. Identify whom to call for the following items:

- 1. Equipment problems
- 2. Backup storage
- 3. Backup transportation
- 4. Security

E. Identify what vaccines to pack first in an emergency. While the power is still working:

- 1. Pack the refrigerated vaccines first with an adequate supply of cold packs.
- 2. Remove and pack the Varicella-containing vaccine, using dry ice, immediately before you transport it.

- F. Pack and transport all vaccine or if that is not possible, determine the types and amounts to save:
- e.g., save only the most expensive vaccines to minimize dollar loss or save some portion of all vaccines to ensure a short term, complete supply for resuming the vaccination schedule. We suggest giving the first priority to the most expensive vaccines to replace.
- G. Follow vaccine-packing procedures for transport to backup storage facilities:
1. Open refrigerated units only when absolutely necessary and only after you have made all preparations for packing and moving the vaccine to alternative storage sites.
  2. Use properly insulated containers.
- H. Move vaccine to backup storage according to pre-arranged plans.
1. How to load transportation vehicle
  2. Routes to take
  3. Time in route

**NOTE:** The two National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration sites below provide up-to-date information on hurricanes:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tlh/tropical/>

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Satellite tracking of significant weather is also available at:

<http://www.goes.noaa.gov/>