



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Mary T. Bassett, MD MPH  
Commissioner

January 22, 2016

Dear Colleague:

A snowstorm and high winds are expected to reach our area between Friday evening and Saturday morning. In the event of a power outage, we want to remind you of the procedures to ensure the safety of your vaccine supply.

**Should you experience a loss of power to your vaccine storage unit, take the following steps:**

1. Keep all refrigerators and freezers closed during the power outage to help conserve the cold mass of the vaccines. **DO NOT OPEN THE UNITS TO CHECK THE TEMPERATURE** until power is restored.
2. If possible, continue to monitor temperatures of the refrigerator or freezer, but **DO NOT OPEN THE UNITS** to do this. If this is not possible, then record the temperature as soon as possible after power is restored. In addition, document the duration of the power outage. This will provide information about the maximum temperature the vaccine was exposed to and the duration of such exposure.
3. Do not discard any vaccine.
4. If the temperature went out of range during the power outage, when power has been restored, clearly mark these vaccines and do not use them until you are able to consult with the vaccine manufacturers or the Bureau of Immunization (BOI). Continue to store the vaccines at recommended temperatures in the event they are still viable.
5. Call the vaccine manufacturers at their toll-free numbers for guidance about vaccine use (GSK 877-356-8368; Merck 800-672-6372; Sanofi Pasteur 800-822-2463; Pfizer 800-438-1985; Novartis 888-669-6682; MedImmune 877-633-4411). For vaccine supplied by the BOI, you should also notify the Vaccines for Children program at 347-396-2405.
6. If vaccine is determined not to be potent, instructions will be provided about how to return the vaccine.
7. If alternative storage with reliable power sources are available (i.e., hospital with generator power), transfer to that facility can be considered. If transporting vaccine, measure the temperature of the refrigerator(s) and freezer(s) when the vaccines are removed. If possible, transport the vaccine following proper cold chain procedures for storage and handling or try to record the temperature the vaccine is exposed to during transport.

Information about managing vaccine storage during power outages is also available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's web site at: [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/vaccinestorage.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/vaccinestorage.asp)

In addition, the BOI's Vaccine Management Plan provides guidance on routine vaccine storage and handling, and is available at: [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/imm-vaccine-mgmt-plan.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/imm-vaccine-mgmt-plan.pdf)

If vaccination of a patient is deferred because of vaccine loss, use a log, the Citywide Immunization Registry or other tracking system to recall your patients once replacement vaccine is available. For assistance with determining whether your vaccines can be used, or for professional or technical questions, please call the BOI at 347-396-2400. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jane R. Zucker'.

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc  
Assistant Commissioner  
Bureau of Immunization