

Reminder: Pharmaceutical Grade or Purpose-Built Refrigerators are Required for All Vaccine Storage Units (Primary and Secondary)

The [Guidelines for Compliance with State Vaccine Program Requirements](#) state requires all enrolled practices to have pharmaceutical grade or purpose-built refrigerators for all refrigerator storage units holding state-supplied vaccine in their facility.

Stand-alone freezers that are not pharmaceutical grade will be acceptable, as long as they maintain the proper storage temperature.

Although there is no specific description of a pharmaceutical grade refrigerator, some of the characteristics include:

- Internal overhead fans to disperse air throughout the unit, eliminating pockets of cold air
- Adjustable wire shelves to allow better air flow
- Electronic digital thermostat
- Microprocessor
- No storage bins or shelves on door
- Typically, pharmaceutical grade refrigerators have a narrow operating range (varying by less than 2°C)

Listed below are a sample of manufacturers and distributors that you may wish to consider for safe vaccine storage in your practice. Please note that the Vaccine Program cannot endorse or recommend specific products or brands.

Aegis	http://www.aegisfridge.com
American Biotech Supply	www.americanbiotechsupply.com
Fisher Scientific (Isotemp)	www.fishersci.com
Helmer	www.helmerinc.com
Migali Scientific Refrigeration	www.migaliscientific.com

The Vaccine Program has determined that most standard domestic combination refrigerator/freezer units are inappropriate for vaccine storage. In addition, many stand-alone refrigerators that are not pharmaceutical grade or purpose-built units lack the necessary features for the safe storage of vaccines. Providers identified to be storing any vaccine in non-pharmaceutical grade or purpose-built refrigerators will receive follow-up contacts to ensure that all storage units are in compliance. In addition, as part of the [Vaccine Program Restitution Policy](#), providers may be held financially responsible for vaccine loss due to negligence. This could be significantly more than the cost of a pharmaceutical grade or purpose-built refrigerator.

Before purchasing a new storage unit, utilize the checklist below to ensure that the unit meets the Vaccine Program's requirements.

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Immunization Division | Vaccine Program**

305 South Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
P: 617-983-6828 | F: 857-323-8320 | Email: dph-vaccine-management@mass.gov

Vaccine Storage Unit Checklist

Complete and return one checklist for every storage unit that will be holding state-supplied vaccines.

Storage Unit:

State-supplied refrigerated vaccines must be stored in a Pharmaceutical Grade or Purpose-Built Refrigerator storage unit (Primary and Secondary Units). State-supplied frozen vaccines must be stored in a standalone freezer.

☐ Refrigerator
(Pharmaceutical)

☐ Refrigerator
(Purpose-Built)

☐ Freezer

☐ Ultra-Cold Freezer*

Site PIN #: _____ Brand: _____ Model #: _____

Refrigerator

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internal fans to disperse air throughout the unit | <input type="checkbox"/> Microprocessor** |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustable wire shelves to allow air flow | <input type="checkbox"/> No storage bins or shelves on door |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic digital thermostat | <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigerator has a narrow operating range (varying by less than 2° C)** |

Freezer

- ☐ Standalone unit, cannot be mix of fridge and freezer (if it is a combination unit, the fridge and freezer must have individual plug-ins for wall outlets)
- ☐ Must be able to store vaccines below -15° C (5° F)

Ultra-Cold Freezer

- ☐ Must be able to maintain temperatures between -90° C and -60° C (-130° F and -76° F)
- ☐ Sites must privately purchase a DDL to monitor temperatures in Ultra-Cold storage units as they will not be provided by the State.

**DDLs for Ultra-Cold Temperatures using a buffered temperature probe provide the most accurate measurement of vaccine temperatures. For accurate ultra-cold temperature monitoring, it is essential to use an air-probe, or a probe designed specifically for ultra-cold temperatures with the DDL.*

****To determine if a storage unit has a microprocessor and is within the operating range, please search the model number online and review the manufacturer website for unit specifications.**

Storage Unit Electrical Plug:

DO NOT plug storage units into a power strip, surge protector, extension cord, battery pack or a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet.

- ☐ The storage unit is plugged directly into a wall outlet.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that storage units are serviced by a technician every two years at minimum to ensure proper functioning and troubleshooting of potential issues.

Completed by: _____ **Date** _____