



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health – Women’s & Children’s Health Section
1917 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1917
Tel 919-707-5550 • Fax 919-870-4824

Michael F. Easley, Governor

Dempsey Benton, Secretary

May 28, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Universal Childhood Vaccine Distribution Program Participants

FROM: Beth Rowe-West, R.N., B.S.N, Head
Immunization Branch

SUBJECT: Hurricane Season

The purpose of this memo is to ensure you are prepared for the 2008 hurricane season. During the months of June through November, hurricanes or tropical storms could pose a threat to North Carolina. In preparation, we would like you to take precautions to protect your vaccine supply now.

To ensure your facility is ready, please take the following steps:

- Ensure you have an up-to-date Disaster Recovery Plan and review it with staff.
- Fill empty space in your refrigerator with water jugs.
- Line the bottom and sides of your freezer with ice packs.
- Ensure your MMR is stored in the freezer. Storing your MMR vaccine in the freezer with your Varicella vaccine significantly increases the likelihood that MMR vaccine will remain viable should you have a power outage.
- Ensure that a certified thermometer is located on the middle shelf with the vaccine in the refrigerator and one is located in the middle of the freezer with the vaccine.
- Check and log the refrigerator and freezer temperatures twice a day, even if you have an alarm system or a monitoring system. Check temperatures, first thing in the morning and once in the evening before leaving.
- Maintain the appropriate packing materials for transporting vaccine (coolers, gel packs, dry ice for Varicella, etc).
- If an emergency situation occurs, do not assume vaccine is not viable. Record the time and temperature of the refrigerator and freezer when you return to the clinic. Store the vaccine at the proper temperatures as indicated on the package insert, mark the vaccine “Not for Use” and call the Immunization Branch. We will work with you to determine if the vaccine is still viable.

Whenever possible, facilities should suspend vaccination activities BEFORE the onset of emergency conditions to allow sufficient time for packing and transporting vaccine. If you do not have a back-up generator, make arrangements with the local hospital, retirement home, fire station, another practice, or an employee’s home. Make arrangements with the site to store your vaccine there when weather predictions call for such inclement weather (tornadoes, hurricanes, ice, severe snow storms, etc.) and when your vaccine storage equipment cannot be fixed or the power cannot be restored within 6 hours. Before moving your vaccine, call the location to ensure their back-up generator is working and temperatures are within the appropriate range.

If you have any questions call the Help Desk Staff at 1-877-873-6247.

cc: RICs Local Health Directors Central Office Staff
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