



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Public Health – Women’s & Children’s Health Section

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Michael F. Easley, Governor

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October 3, 2008

**TO:** Local Health Department Immunization Staff  
**FROM:** Beth Rowe-West, R.N., B.S.N., Immunization Branch Head  
**SUBJECT:** Assessment of Refrigerator/Freezer Capacity

The CDC is announcing new restrictions on refrigeration and freezer units used for vaccine storage. This change is necessary to assure vaccines are properly stored and handled and that the most viable product is administered. Providers are expected to comply with these requirements by the end of 2009. We have identified a limited amount of federal funds to help you meet these specifications and improve your vaccine storage and handling capability. These are federal funds which are restricted to vaccine storage, handling and accountability.

Refrigerators and freezers capable of meeting appropriate vaccine storage and handling conditions are important to assure that vaccines are administered safely and produce optimal immunity against vaccine preventable diseases. Storage of state-supplied vaccine in refrigerators with internal freezers designed for use in small household spaces or dorm rooms are never acceptable for long term storage of vaccines.

Refrigerators or freezers used for vaccine storage must also meet the following requirements:

- Separate freezer compartment with a separate exterior door.
- Ability to maintain required vaccine storage temperatures twenty four hours a day, year-round.
- Large enough to hold a three month inventory during the highest volume time of the year
- Large enough to assure adequate air circulation and without over crowding
- Be dedicated to the storage of vaccines (biological specimens, food and beverages must not be stored in a vaccine storage unit to avoid contamination and because this practice results in frequent opening of the door and destabilization of temperatures).

If your vaccine storage units do not comply with the criteria listed above, we would like to assist you in acquiring the scientific style refrigerator/freezers that will meet the specifications outlined above. In order to complete this process, we must hear from you by **Friday, October, 10, 2008**. Orders placed after this time cannot be honored.

Please call **Richard Carney at 919-707-5554** to discuss your equipment needs. If possible, please have the following information available before you call: measurement of the location where the refrigerator/freezer will be housed and an estimated number of doses to be stored in the unit during a three month high usage period.

**CC:** Immunization Central Office Staff  
Regional Immunization Nurses  
Regional Consultants

