



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Public Health**

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October 4, 2013

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP) Providers  
**FROM:** Beth Rowe-West, RN., BSN, Head *BRW*  
Immunization Branch  
**SUBJECT:** Tropical Storm/Hurricane Karen

The purpose of this memo is to alert you of the possibility of Tropical Storm Karen impacting your practice's vaccine storage. Please ensure your facility is ready for potential inclement weather. Facilities should suspend vaccination activities **BEFORE** the onset of emergency conditions to allow sufficient time for packing and transporting vaccine to your designated back-up location with a back up generator. **Vaccine should be moved if there is a chance power cannot be restored within 6 hours.** Before moving your vaccine, call the location to ensure their back-up generator is working and cold storage unit temperatures are within the appropriate range.

**All providers should take the following steps:**

1. Make sure you fill the empty space in your refrigerator with water jugs and your freezer with ice packs.
2. Ensure a working thermometer is located in the refrigerator and the freezer.
3. Log the time and temperature of the freezer and refrigerator before you leave for the day.
4. Review your Disaster Recovery Plan with all staff.
5. The designated primary and backup vaccine coordinators should:
  - a. Track inclement weather conditions
  - b. If the facility has a backup generator, ensure that sufficient fuel is on hand to continuously run the generator for at least 72 hours.

**Key points to remember if a power outage occurs:**

- Record the current temperature of the refrigerator/freezer.
- During a power outage, refrigerator/freezer units will maintain temperatures depending on the number of water bottles in the refrigerator and freezer packs in the freezer.
- Hourly monitor temperatures. Once the temperatures reaches 8 C or warmer in the refrigerator or -15 C or warmer in the freezer begin your disaster recovery procedures.
- Move the vaccine to a properly working unit. Do not move the vaccine to a unit if temperatures have not regularly recorded in range temperatures.
- Do not allow the vaccine to remain in a nonfunctioning unit. If vaccines are discovered in a nonfunctioning unit, mark the vaccine as "DO NOT USE" and move to a refrigerator/freezer that is working properly.
- Do not discard vaccine and do not administer affected vaccines until you have discussed the viability of the vaccine with the Immunization Branch.
- Transport refrigerated vaccines in an insulated cooler with a barrier separating the refrigerated vaccines from the ice/cold packs. Frozen vaccines should be transported to maintain temperatures of -15 C or colder. If your emergency back-up location is more than 30 minutes away and you have a large quantity of vaccine, consider renting a refrigerated truck to transport your vaccine.
- Please take time to review your *Minimum Storage and Handling Procedures* document.

**If you need assistance preparing for the storm contact the NCIP Help Desk at 1-877-873-6247 and select option 4.**

cc: SMT CO staff RICs RINs Steve Shore Greg Griggs

www.ncdhhs.gov • [www.publichealth.nc.gov](http://www.publichealth.nc.gov) • www.immunize.nc.gov

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