



DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



## **PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT**

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### **Vaccine Storage During Public Safety Power Shutoffs**

As we enter October, the danger of fall wildfires driven by high winds increase the chances that Pacific Gas & Electric will need to turn off electric power lines to protect public safety. Given that Marin County is in a fire danger area, during periods of high-risk, power to all or parts of Marin could be shut off for hours or days.

Last week, the California Department of Public Health released a letter outlining steps that clinics can take to prepare and respond to an extended power outage and reduce the risk of spoiling a clinic's vaccine supply. Please review the letter at: [http://eziz.org/assets/docs/VFC\\_Letters/2019/09-26PowerShutOffs.pdf](http://eziz.org/assets/docs/VFC_Letters/2019/09-26PowerShutOffs.pdf)

Key recommendations include:

- **Register** with PG&E [https://www.pge.com/en\\_US/residential/outages/alerts/alerts.page](https://www.pge.com/en_US/residential/outages/alerts/alerts.page) and AlertMarin (<https://www.marinsheriff.org/services/emergency-services/alert-marine>) to receive outage notifications and updates.
- **Arrange** for an alternate vaccine storage location with proper storage units and temperature monitoring to temporarily store your vaccines during an emergency. Consider places with a back-up generator (hospitals, retail pharmacies, large healthcare providers).
- **Maintain** enough thermal mass in your vaccine storage units -- add water bottles to your refrigerator and ice packs to your freezer -- to maintain temperatures during the first 2 hours of a power loss as you prepare to transport your vaccines.
- **Ensure** you have the proper supplies needed to transport vaccines, such as a hard-sided cooler, cold packs, insulating material (e.g. bubble wrap), and a temperature data logger.
- **Train** your staff in the proper procedure for packing vaccine to maintain proper temperatures during transport for refrigerated vaccine (<http://www.eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-983.pdf>) and frozen vaccine (<http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-1130.pdf>)

Once power is restored and your regular vaccine storage units are within appropriate temperature ranges, transport the vaccines back to your clinic following the same transport procedures.

If vaccines were exposed to any out-of-range temperatures during storage or transport:

- Vaccine for Children providers must report the incident to SHOTS through your MyVFCvaccines account (<http://eziz.org/myvfcvaccines/>), and follow instructions given by the SHOTS system.
- Non-VFC providers should contact their vaccine manufacturers to determine if the vaccine exposed to out-of-range temperatures is viable or spoiled.

The California VFC website offers state-of-the-art training resources and job aids regarding vaccine storage, handling, and transport. See <http://eziz.org/eziz-training/> and <http://eziz.org/resources/>

For questions or additional information, contact: Immunization Program, Communicable Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC) Unit  
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