IS THE POWER DOWN?

KNOW HOW TO KEEP YOUR VACCINES SAFE THIS STORM SEASON

Sydney North Health Network

NSW GOVERNMENT Health Northern Sydney Local Health District

Adapted from: National Vaccine Storage Guidelines Strive For Five 4th Edition, 2025, Section 7

PREPARE NOW BEFORE A POWER FAILURE

- Develop a plan for power outages, including access to alternative storage
- Practise implementing your plan, including packing vaccines into alternative storage, to ensure that the plan will work in a real power failure situation

CHECKLIST

☐ Identify and secure alternative storage options and equipment, such as:
    ☐ Back-up power supply (generator, battery, solar)
    ☐ Monitored offsite PBVR* (e.g. hospital or pharmacy) with formal agreement
    ☐ Sufficient coolers that can accommodate:
        ☐ Loosely packed vaccines
        ☐ Ice or gel packs
        ☐ Insulating material (e.g. bubble-wrap)
    ☐ Minimum/maximum thermometer (slush-test checked) or data logger (calibrated)
    ☐ Minimum/maximum temperature recording chart
☐ Contact the PBVR manufacturer to understand how it operates during a power failure
☐ Ensure all staff involved in handling vaccines (including reception staff if required) have completed the online cold chain training module

WHAT TO DO DURING A POWER FAILURE

☐ Place a sign on the PBVR that says "VACCINES UNDER QUARANTINE – DO NOT DISCARD"
☐ Keep PBVR door closed
☐ Continuously monitor temperature using a:
    ☐ Battery-operated minimum/maximum thermometer or
    ☐ Portable data logger
☐ Contact the **Public Health Unit for advice (1300 066 055)** as soon as practical during business hours

- Ensure you have a strategy in place for long-term storage dependent on the length of the power outage. Refer to NSW Health guidance

Remember:
- Never transport vaccines without a thermometer or data logger
- Do NOT use domestic fridges for vaccine storage
- If no alternative storage is available:
    - Isolate vaccines in PBVR with door closed
    - Use thermometer to assess temperature after power returns

WHAT TO DO ONCE POWER IS RESTORED

☐ Record PBVR temperature and reset the minimum/maximum thermometer
☐ Confirm PBVR is between +2°C and +8°C before returning vaccines to PBVR
☐ Download the temperatures from the data logger or minimum/maximum thermometer from the alternative storage if using
☐ Monitor PBVR hourly for 4 hours until the PBVR temperature is consistently between +2 to +8 °C, then return to twice daily monitoring
☐ If the temperature has been outside +2 to +8 °C, place a sign on the PBVR that says "VACCINES UNDER QUARANTINE – DO NOT DISCARD". Do NOT use or discard vaccines until advised by the Public Health Unit (1300 066 055)

*PBVR = purpose-built vaccine refrigerator