Indiana Vaccines for Children (VFC) Storage Unit Requirements

Indiana State Department of Health- Immunization Division

The Indiana Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program has specific requirements for storage units. Prior to being granted vaccine ordering privileges, providers must submit a picture(s) of their storage unit(s) to verify that all units are in adherence with CDC and Indiana VFC guidelines.

For information on purchasing a storage unit, see the Storage Unit Purchasing Guide.

STORAGE UNIT OVERVIEW: TYPES OF UNITS DEFINED

Laboratory- or Pharmaceutical-Grade Units • Engineered for the storage of temperature-sensitive biologic agents such as vaccine • Preferred for use in the Indiana VFC program	***Household/Commercial/Domestic Units*** • Designed for the storage of food, but are acceptable for storing vaccine • Combination units are prohibited for storage of VFC vaccine at any time.
Stand-Alone Units • Contain either a refrigerator or freezer compartment, not both • Acceptable for use in the Indiana VFC program	***Combination Units**** • Contain both refrigerator and freezer compartments • Prohibited for use in the Indiana VFC program
Compact Stand-Alone Units • Small refrigerator or freezer units • Available in household or pharmaceutical grade	***Dorm- or Bar-Style Units*** • Contain a single exterior door and small freezer section • Prohibited for use in the Indiana VFC program
*Note: Combination pharmaceutical-grade units have separate temperature controls for the refrigerator and freezer compartments, allowing each compartment to maintain temperatures independently. These are permissible for the storage of VFC vaccine.	

UNACCEPTABLE STORAGE UNITS

The following types of storage units are prohibited for the storage of VFC vaccine, even temporarily. This includes storage units at your backup storage site in case of emergency vaccine transport to your backup location.

Combination Units

- Prohibited due to their inability to maintain stable temperatures for the refrigerator and freezer compartments. There is a risk of the refrigerator component accidentally freezing vaccine.

Dormitory or Bar-Style Units

- These units are unable to maintain temperatures for vaccine storage, and have been shown to expose refrigerated vaccine to freezing temperatures.

Manual Defrost Units

- Manual defrost *refrigerators* are prohibited for use in the VFC program.

- These units have significant temperature variations and risk freezing refrigerated vaccine.

- Auto-defrost refrigerators are *required*, and auto-defrost freezers are *recommended*.

- Providers using manual defrost freezers must defrost regularly as frost buildup can affect the freezer's ability to maintain appropriate temperatures.

Convertible Refrigerator Units

- These contain an internal switch that converts an all-refrigerator unit to an all-freezer unit,

Cryogenic Freezers

- These freezers reach temperatures well below -50 C (-58 F), which is too cold for frozen vaccines.

ACCEPTABLE STORAGE UNITS

Pharmaceutical-Grade Units (Best Practice)

- Highest-quality vaccine storage unit.
- Have excellent temperature stability and maintain greater temperature uniformity compared to household units.
- Pharmaceutical-grade combination units are acceptable for the VFC program.

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Stand-Alone Household/Commercial Units

- Single storage unit that is either a refrigerator or freezer.
- Commercial-grade units are used primarily in the food industry, and are superior to household units.
- Refrigerators *must* have auto defrost (self-defrosting) specifications. Manual defrost refrigerators are not allowed.
- Freezers are recommended to have auto defrosting.

Stand-Alone, Under the Counter Units

- Compact and space-saving.
- Great for small offices with low VFC-eligible patient volume.
- Must be either household or pharmaceutical grade.
- Refrigerators must be self-defrosting.
- Freezers are recommended to be self-defrosting.

For more information on storage and handling best practices, please review the CDC Storage and Handling Toolkit.