

COLD CHAIN · GP PRACTICES & CLINICS

What to do in a cold chain breach

A calm, step-by-step plan for the moment a vaccine fridge reading is out of range. Print it and stick it on the fridge.

— Do this straight away

- 1 **Don't panic and don't bin anything.** Vaccines that have been out of range are not automatically unusable.
- 2 **Quarantine the stock.** Keep the vaccines in the fridge (or move to a working vaccine fridge), labelled "Do not use until advised".
- 3 **Record the facts.** Write down the current, minimum and maximum readings, when the fridge was last read within range, and the likely cause.
- 4 **Fix the cause if you can.** Check the plug, the door seal, whether the door was left open, and whether the fridge is overfilled.
- 5 **Get advice.** Contact your local screening and immunisation team and, where needed, the vaccine manufacturers, giving them the details you recorded.
- 6 **Follow the advice you get.** Use or dispose of the stock exactly as advised, and record the decision.
- 7 **Report and learn.** Record it as an incident or significant event and review what would stop it happening again.

— Breach record

Date found _____

Found by _____

Fridge / location _____

Current reading _____

Min reading _____

Max reading _____

Last in-range reading _____

Estimated time out of range _____

Vaccine	Batch	Expiry	Quantity	Advice received	Outcome

Vaccine	Batch	Expiry	Quantity	Advice received	Outcome

Advice given by _____ Date and time _____

Cause identified _____ Incident reference _____

— Prevention checklist

- ☐ Switch-off protection: a labelled plug or a switchless socket
- ☐ Two thermometers or a data logger on every vaccine fridge
- ☐ A named lead and a deputy for the cold chain
- ☐ Daily readings on every working day, including after bank holidays
- ☐ A plan for power cuts and fridge failure, including a back-up fridge or validated cool boxes
- ☐ Staff trained in this plan during induction

Stock up in one order

Order by 4pm for next-day delivery. One account, one invoice.

[Medical fridges →](#)

[Free temperature book →](#)

This resource is general guidance to help you organise your practice. It does not replace national guidance, manufacturer instructions or your own policies, which you should always follow. Check that it reflects the current requirements that apply to your organisation. Produced by Medical Supermarket, a trading name of ProCure Health Ltd.