

## Prepare for the storm season – safeguard your vaccines

It is important to prepare for storm season which generally occurs between October and March each year. Storms are a common cause of power failure (including power surges, spikes, blackouts and brownouts), which can place your vaccines at risk from temperature fluctuations.

### Remember

- Purpose-built vaccine fridges (especially ones with a glass door) may only maintain their temperature for up to 20-30 minutes.
- Domestic refrigerators may hold their temperature up to 4 hours in a power failure due to insulation.

*If there is a power failure you may need to transfer your vaccines into alternative safe storage, such as a monitored cooler/s.*

*When moving vaccines to a cooler/s, **do not** remove the vaccines from their original packaging. The packaging provides a buffer around the vaccines which helps prevent damage during transportation, protects vaccine potency by reducing exposure to UV light and fluorescent light and assists to maintain a stable temperature around the vaccine.*

***Now is the time to check that everything is in place so you can be confident that your vaccines will be as safe as possible during storm season.***

### Do you have the following?

- Appropriate cooler/s large enough to hold all your vaccines?
- A sufficient number of gel/ice packs to chill the cooler/s?
- A freezer where the gel/ice packs can be stored so ready for use?
- Sufficient packaging material, such as polystyrene chips, bubble-wrap or shredded paper to protect the vaccines from direct contact with the gel/ice packs?
- A digital min/max thermometer and a temperature recording chart for **each** cooler to monitor the vaccine temperature? *QHIP will supply **one** digital min/max thermometer per practice.*
- Each digital min/max thermometer *has had an accuracy check (slush test) and the batteries been changed and in the last 12 months*
- Written procedures for staff to follow?
- A trial run completed to check your procedures work in practice?
- All staff handling vaccines have received training in vaccine management?

*Do you have an approved vaccine management protocol [contact Sunshine Coast Public Health Unit for a template to update your vaccine management protocol].*

If the answer is '**no**' to any of the above questions, refer to the 'National Vaccine Storage Guidelines – Strive for 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition and handouts 'Managing a vaccine fridge during a power failure' & 'How to pack a cooler'.