# VFC VACCINE STORAGE REQUIREMENTS

The Maryland VFC Program requires all newly enrolled VFC providers or currently enrolled providers who are in the process of replacing their vaccine storage unit(s) to have a stand-alone storage unit(s) or pharmaceutical unit(s) to store vaccines beginning February, 2018.

A stand-alone refrigerator is a separate or single storage unit that is able to maintain the required temperature to store vaccines at a temperature between 36°F and 46°F (2°C and 8°C). A stand-alone freezer is a separate or single storage unit that is able to maintain the required temperature to store frozen vaccines (Varicella, MMRV, and Zoster) at a temperature of 5°F or lower (-15°C or lower).

**Stand-alone units must be:**

1. Dedicated to the storage of biologics;
2. Large enough to hold inventory at the busiest point in the year without overcrowding (including influenza vaccine); and
3. Have enough room to store water bottles in the refrigerator and freezer to stabilize temperatures in the event of a power outage.

**Pharmaceutical grade storage units** are sometimes referred to as "purpose-built" units and are designed specifically for storage of biologics. These units have:

1. Microprocessor-based temperature control with a digital temperature sensor (thermocouple, resistance temperature detector [RTD], or thermistor);
2. Fan-forced air circulation; and
3. Powerful fans or multiple cool air vents inside the unit that promote uniform temperature and fast temperature recovery.

**VFC does not recommend storage of any vaccine in a dormitory-style or bar-style, combined refrigerator/freezer unit under any circumstances, even temporarily.**

A dormitory-style refrigerator is defined as a small combination freezer/refrigerator unit with one exterior door and an evaporator plate (cooling coil), which is usually located inside an icemaker compartment within the refrigerator. These units have exhibited severe temperature control and stability issues throughout the entire storage area. The use of this type of unit is prohibited for storage of VFC vaccines.

Reference:
*Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases, 13th Edition*
*2016 CDC Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit (Page 13)*

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