



## VACCINE HANDLING IN EXTREME HEAT

6/24/2021

An unprecedented heat wave will blanket much of Oregon this weekend and into next week. COVID-19 vaccine providers should continue to administer vaccine while taking extra precautions to protect vaccine recipients and caregivers, clinical staff and vaccine doses.

We do not recommend holding outdoor clinics. If necessary, consider limiting them to just morning hours before temperatures become extreme, and keep the vaccine at refrigerated temperatures until the last possible moment before vaccine administration. Check storage unit temperatures frequently. Protect staff and visitors by providing shade, fans and refreshments. **Recipients should spend the post-vaccination observation period in an air-conditioned space (including their cars), as long as staff can observe them.**

Indoors, be aware of ambient room temperature. Vaccines can be stored for various periods of time at room temperature before use—but only room temperature as defined by the Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs).

The following periods are the room temperature limits in time:

- **Pfizer:** unpunctured up to 2 hours and up to 6 hours after puncture and mixing at room temperature (up to 77F)
- **Moderna:** unpunctured up to 24 hours and punctured up to 12 hours at room temperature (up to 77F)
- **Johnson & Johnson:** unpunctured up to 12 hours and punctured up to 2 hours at room temperature (up to 77F)

The most important thing to observe for these hot days is if the room temperature exceeds 77F, it is no longer considered safe storage of these vaccines. If room temperature is at or approaching 77F, modify your workflow so vaccines are kept refrigerated up until the moment they are administered.

With Pfizer vaccine, also keep diluent under 77F so that it does not damage the vaccine when they are mixed.

We don't recommend transporting vaccine at temperatures above 85F. If it is necessary to transport vaccine at higher temperatures, be sure to transport it in suitable transport containers inside of the

passenger compartment (not the trunk) of a vehicle. Before moving the vaccine transport container into the vehicle, cool the vehicle interior to a comfortable temperature.

Along with high temperatures comes the possibility of power loss. Immunization providers need a plan in case power blackouts occur in their area, whether controlled or caused by high wind. Back-up generator power that supplies your vaccine storage units is the ideal way to do this. The next-best approach is an agreement with a nearby facility that could accommodate your vaccine stocks in their own temperature-monitored, generator-supplied units in the event of a power outage. In some cases, a prepared “qualified container and packout” (see glossary of the [CDC’s Storage and Handling Toolkit](#)) could store vaccine safely for a few days without any power.

Now, as the fire, wind and extreme heat season begins, is a great time to finalize your vaccine protection plan should the lights go out.

We appreciate your careful stewardship of the COVID-19 vaccine. Please remember, Oregon’s vaccine supply has stabilized, and vaccinated people are more important than wasted vaccine. Don’t hesitate to give a COVID-19 vaccination whenever possible.