

*This is a compilation of Q&A from the trainings that have been held, questions that have come in from COVID19questions@bop.gov, and elsewhere. Questions that are new or updated from previous versions have been **highlighted**.*

Vaccine and Supplies Storage & Handling:

What is the Ultra-Low Temperature (ULT) range? **It is -70 °C, with an acceptable range of -60 to -80 °C.**

If the freezer is available instead of a refrigerator, can we store it in the regular freezer vs a refrigerator? **COVID-19 vaccines cannot be stored in a standard freezer.**

Do we need to open/inspect the vaccine shipping container the day it arrives? **Yes. Upon receipt of vaccine, sites must immediately inspect the vaccine for damage then place into refrigeration storage (2°C to 8°C [36°F to 46°F]) as soon as feasible. If there is a delay of more than 2 hours from receipt to refrigeration, Central Office must be notified.**

Are there limitations on opening/closing the refrigerator for vaccine stability? **Not on the refrigerator, but there are limitations on the cold shipper box. The CDC has great information on vaccine storage and handling. It includes which shelves to use and how to arrange them within the fridge. It's important to note those recommendations apply to ALL vaccines.**

CDC vaccine storage requirements are available here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf>

Should thawing before reconstitution be done under refrigeration or at room temperature? When the vaccine comes out of the fridge, do you have to wait 30 min for it to reach room temp or is it considered thawed when it comes out of the fridge? **Prior to reconstitution, the vaccine can be moved to room temperature either from the refrigerator or directly from the frozen shipper.**

If you take a vial out of fridge to give to a patient and they refuse at the last minute, can we put back in fridge? **No, you cannot return a vial to the refrigerator after removal and should follow the CDC guidance for how long the vaccine may remain at room temperature**

Our executive staff recommended that we give vaccinations in the visiting room since all staff will go by it either entering or leaving the building. What are your thoughts on this? **The vaccine can be stored in the cold shipper during administration as long as temperature ranges remain within the required range of (2 – 8°C) during vaccination clinic events.**

Can cold shippers be used for vaccination clinics? **Yes, cold shippers and temperature data loggers should be utilized to ensure and track maintenance of refrigerated temperatures (2 – 8°C) during vaccination clinic events.**

In response to the fact that vaccine must be used within a limited time frame: How is this being tracked? The institution Vaccine Point of Contacts (VPOC) are responsible for vaccine storage and ensuring appropriate storage and tracking. Temperature data loggers were shipped with cold shippers to all institutions. The temperature data log files created by the data loggers will serve as record of storage temps and can be plugged into a USB drive and are already approved for use in BOP computers.

Will inventory be separated between inmate and staff, like with Flu? No

Updated 11/2/21 – Are there protocols for waste if we have to? The primary objective is to not have waste. Doing so would not only limit the number of people being protected, but the institution would need to be able to explain the reason for the waste to subsequent auditors. However, vaccinations should not be held in the attempt to schedule enough people to avoid waste. Vaccine waste due to less persons to vaccinate than doses in the vial is considered “rational waste” and expected.

Updated 11/2/21 - If an institution has left over vaccine after vaccinating staff and inmates, what should the institution do with it? If you anticipate leftover vaccine or have vaccine nearing its expiration date, it is essential to coordinate with CAPT Crockett to reduce waste.

Does the diluent of the Pfizer product need to be refrigerated? No

What is included in the ancillary kits? Syringes, needles for reconstitution and administration, diluent, vaccine administration cards, and a limited amount of PPE (face shields and gowns) will be included in the kits. Not included are gloves (the CDC does not recommend gloves when administering vaccinations) and sharps containers.

Do syringes ship with the vaccine at the same time? Ancillary kits, including syringes, will arrive before or on the same day as the vaccine.

What is the inventory process be for the kits? All sharps received in kits must be inventoried and accounted for per BOP policy.