

PURPOSE BUILT VACCINE REFRIGERATORS (source: AGPAL)

AGPAL is often contacted by practices seeking advice on the pros and cons of purpose built vaccine refrigerators.

Many practices say their experience of using purpose-built vaccine refrigerators helps maintain cold chain and saves "many valuable staff hours and grief".

"Purpose-built vaccine refrigerators can prevent the fridge from freezing vaccines - the greatest danger in terms of reduced efficacy," said one practice.

IF I HAVE A PURPOSE BUILT VACCINE FRIDGE DO I HAVE TO CHECK IT EVERY DAY?

AGPAL advises practices using these units to continue monitoring the maximum and minimum temperatures on a daily basis. If the temperature is not between 2°C to 8°C then the practice team must take action. Although purpose build fridges are excellent at maintaining a constant temperature, things can still go wrong. Power outs may still occur which makes daily monitoring essential.

As there are many different makes and models of purpose built vaccine fridges on the market, ensure you read the manufacturer's instructions including how your purpose built vaccine fridge records the fridge temperatures. This may include:

1. a daily chart recorder. Min/max temperatures must be checked every day
2. a min/max digital readout on outside of the fridge that must be checked and documented every day
3. a data logger provided with the fridge. The details must be downloaded and min/max temperatures checked every day
4. connection to a computer. Min/max temperatures must be checked every day.

MANUAL VS COMPUTER RECORDING

Practices with a purpose-built vaccine refrigerator have asked AGPAL "if the computer records the temperature, do I have to manually record that I have monitored it each day?"

The answer? The Standards ask practices to monitor and record. If a practice has a computerised system they log into each day to monitor the minimum and maximum temperature, then they meet the Standards.

Why? By logging onto the system each day the practice has automatically generated an audit trail that proves they are monitoring temperatures everyday. Often these systems are able to generate a daily summary of the minimum and maximum temperatures over a specified period. Check if your system does this.

However! If a practice has a daily download or a hobo logger type of system they still need to download daily and monitor the temperatures.

Also, if a practice's purpose built fridge has a min/max digital temperature readout on the outside of the fridge and is not automatically downloaded to a computer program then the practice **must** record the minimum and maximum temperatures manually.

MORE INFORMATION?

For more information on Vaccine Cold Chain Management please visit QBAY on our website. If the issue cannot be solved here, ask the experts on QexCHANGE at www.agpal.com.au.
AGPAL's Standards Team info@agpal.com.au or 1300 362 111

FOR HOW LONG SHOULD FRIDGE TEMPERATURE RECORDS BE KEPT?

AGPAL have issued the following advice:

As indicated in standards for General Practice temperature must be monitored and recorded for minimum and maximum temperature for vaccine storage. The RACGP Standards do not dictate how long your records need to be kept; they just require an active log to be available for the surveyor to review at the time of accreditation.

However, it is suggested that for risk management purposes a practice keep vaccine refrigerator logbooks for at least as long as they would patient medical records, i.e. 18 years for a child + 7 years for an adult.

As it is a risk management issue, we would strongly recommend that the practice principal contact his or her medical defence organisation for more specialised advice.

More information: Check out [QbAY](#) for everything you need in one place with more than 600 information sheets designed to help you glide through accreditation and the standards. You can contact AGPAL on info@agpal.com.au