



CIRCULAR NO: H....199... /2021

**TO: THE CHIEF OF OPERATIONS
ALL CHIEF DIRECTORS/ DIRECTORS/ DISTRICT MANAGERS
HEADS: ALL HOSPITALS, COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES, CLINICS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HEALTH: CITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**N.B. FOR CIRCULATION TO ALL: FACILITY MANAGERS; DESIGNATED NURSING OFFICIALS;
RESPONSIBLE PHARMACISTS; PHARMACISTS AND POST BASIC PHARMACISTS' ASSISTANTS**

**CONTINGENCY PLANS TO MAINTAIN COLD CHAIN FOR THERMOLABILE MEDICINES DURING
EMERGENCIES E.G. LONG-TERM POWER OUTAGES**

This circular is applicable to all pharmacies, dispensaries, medicine or consultation rooms where medicines are kept.

In the event of temperature excursions, staff must act immediately by checking with District/Sub structure Pharmacy Manager if stock may still be used, and if necessary, by moving the stock to a fridge in working order as per contingency plan, whilst fridge is repaired/replaced.

All fridges which contain thermolabile medicines, including those in medicine rooms, observation rooms and wards, must have a continuous temperature monitoring device. Fridge temperature must be checked twice per day with at least a 7-hour interval between checks, in accordance with Good Pharmacy Practice.

Vaccines and thermolabile medicines should be stored in fridges which are connected to emergency generators or UPS devices. Generators and UPS systems should be checked regularly every three months to ensure backup systems are reliable. This must be documented, and records must be kept.

Fridges must be connected to their own power sockets. Do not overload the socket with other electronics.

Surge protector plugs must be used to prevent damage to fridges during power surges in accordance with Contract notice 111/2021.

All sites where vaccines and thermolabile medicines are stored must have a contingency plan for emergencies e.g., in case of longer than expected load shedding or unexpected fridge failures.

1. The contingency plan in place to move stock to a site with a generator or UPS must be clearly written and attached to outer door of fridge – relevant contact details must be listed.
2. A WHO prequalified cooler box is available and ready for use to transfer vaccines in the event of an emergency:
 - Cooler box is assembled and kept in designated area ready for use.
 - Sufficient ice bricks are filled with water and kept frozen (ready for conditioning).
 - Temperature loggers available.
3. Alternate site must have sufficient capacity to take on the additional stock.
4. It is recommended that all sites storing thermolabile medicines including vaccines should conduct a dry run using water for injection (same volume as content of fridge) to transfer stock to an alternate site between 2-8 ° C as part of their contingency plan.

Vaccines should be stored in vaccine fridges with long holdover periods. In cases where long holdover fridges cannot be used, ensure more vigilant monitoring of fridges.

Thank you for your co-operation.



MS K. LOWENHERZ

DIRECTOR: MEDICINE MANAGEMENT, LABORATORY AND BLOOD SERVICES SUPPORT

WESTERN CAPE GOVERNMENT: HEALTH

DATE: 30/11/21

