

Vaccine Hubs play a critical role

Hospitals play a critical role in vaccine viability by ensuring proper vaccine storage and handling, especially during vaccine transport. If you are a hospital that intends to store the COVID-19 vaccine and distribute it to affiliated or non-affiliated facilities, you are a Vaccine Hub. Operating as a Hub involves several requirements and restrictions that each facility agrees to when enrolling to provide the COVID-19 vaccine.

Key responsibilities

- The hospital will order the vaccines directly in the Vaccine Inventory Management System (VIMS) for all associated primary care offices they serve. See our [COVID-19 VIMS User Guide](#) for more information on this.
- Receive COVID-19 vaccine and the ancillary kits and store them according to enrolled COVID-19 provider requirements (see chart below).
- The vaccines will be part of the hospital's vaccine inventory. Reconciliations of inventory are required weekly on Wednesdays.
- Ancillary kits must be tracked and redistributed with the vaccine.
- Transfers must be entered into VIMS for all vaccines moving to affiliated locations. Once a transfer has been entered into VIMS, the receiving practice is responsible for accounting for those doses in VIMS. See our [VIMS Transfer How-To](#) for more information on this.

How transferring vaccine is changing

Transferring pre-drawn syringes and punctured vials is no longer allowed

When acting as a Vaccine Hub, only full vials may be redistributed. At the beginning of the vaccine roll-out, the state allowed flexibility to transport pre-filled syringes and punctured vials to accommodate the state priority to "waste no dose". Now that vaccine supply is plentiful, accountability to vaccine management must align with requirements of other state-supplied vaccines.

Redistribution of COVID-19 vaccine

Some redistribution aspects depend on whether the receiving location will permanently maintain the vaccine or function as an off-site clinic.

- If transferred for permanent storage, the hospital must document the transfer in VIMS. This documentation may not be necessary for single day off-site clinics.
- If storing permanently, the receiving location must place the vaccine in storage immediately. During off-site clinics, the vaccines should be kept in the portable storage unit, and the unit temperature recorded every hour until the clinic is complete. Unopened vials must be returned to the permanent location at the end of the clinic. Never leave the vaccine overnight in a vaccine carrier.

Concerns about waste

Please see the state's [Minimizing Waste Policy](#) for information on the state's current approach to vaccine waste.

Hospital as a Vaccine Hub Requirements and Restrictions

Hub Storage Requirements	<p>All Vermont hospitals are enrolled in the COVID-19 vaccination program. As a part of this agreement, hospitals are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store and handle COVID-19 vaccines under proper conditions, including maintaining cold chain conditions and chain of custody at all times. • Monitor storage unit temperatures at all times, using equipment and practices that comply with CDC guidance. • Comply with Immunization Program guidance for handling temperature excursions. • Monitor and comply with COVID-19 vaccine expiration dates. • Preserve all records related to the COVID-19 vaccine for a minimum of three years. • Comply with federal instructions and timelines for disposing of COVID-19 vaccine and diluent, including unused doses.
Receiving practice COVID-19 enrollment status	<p>Only redistribute vaccine to a COVID-19 enrolled site. If unsure of a site's enrollment status, contact AHS.VDHImmunizationProgram@vermont.gov. In addition, all locations must receive COVID-19 vaccine training from the Immunization Program before administering the vaccine.</p>
Vaccine Transfer Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A hospital can deliver the vaccine to the receiving location, or the receiving location may pick vaccine up from the hospital. • Transfer unopened vials only. Transporting partial vials or pre-drawn syringes is not allowed. • Provide documentation of the beyond-use date to the receiving facility and any documentation related to possible temperature excursions. This includes, marking date and time when vaccine has been removed from ultracold or frozen storage. • Transport equal amounts of vaccines, diluents, and ancillary supplies (including vaccination record cards and PPE). • Receiving facility will manage the vaccine until expiration or the beyond-use date
Vaccine Transfer Requirements	<p>Vaccines must be transported in a stable storage unit and monitored with a digital data logger. Record the time and min/max temperature at the beginning and end of transport. For more information, please review the Vaccine Storage and Handling for Off-site Clinics guidance, which examines all considerations for transported vaccines.</p>
Ordering and Reconciliation	<p>Vaccine directly ships to the hospital, and the hospital must reconcile weekly. When the vaccine is redistributed, the hospital is responsible for documenting this transfer to the receiving PCP office in the Vaccine Inventory Management System (VIMS).</p>