

Dormitory-Style Units

Excerpt from the 2012 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Storage and Handling Toolkit.

Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf>

CDC does not recommend storage of any vaccine in a dormitory-style (or bar-style) combined refrigerator/freezer unit under any circumstances. A dormitory-style refrigerator is defined as a small combination refrigerator/freezer unit that is outfitted with one exterior door and an evaporator plate (cooling coil), which is usually located inside an icemaker compartment (freezer) within the refrigerator. The 2009 NIST research concluded that “the dorm-style refrigerator is NOT recommended for vaccine storage under any circumstance.” In performance testing, the dormitory-style refrigerator demonstrated consistently unacceptable performance, regardless of where the vaccine was placed inside the unit. This type of unit exhibited severe temperature control and stability issues. Large spatial temperature gradients confirmed that there is no “good” vaccine storage area in this style unit.¹ Dormitory-style (or bar-style) units pose a significant risk of freezing vaccine even when used for temporary storage. Please note that the use of dormitory-style units for storage of VFC vaccines or other vaccines purchased with public funds is prohibited. There are compact, purpose-built storage units for biologics that are not considered to be dormitory-style or bar-style.



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Dormitory-style (or bar-style) combined refrigerator/freezer units should NOT be used for any storage of any vaccine.

1. Chojnacky, M. J.; Miller, W. W.; Ripple, D. C.; Strouse, G. F.; Thermal Analysis of Refrigeration Systems Used for Vaccine Storage; November 02, 2009; http://www.nist.gov/manuscript-publication-search.cfm?pub_id=904574.