Using accurate thermometers protects your vaccine. It helps make sure you give viable vaccines to your patients. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) requires the use of thermometers with a current certificate of calibration for monitoring temperatures in each vaccine storage unit. The thermometers must be calibrated by an ILAC/MRA accredited laboratory or to ISO/IEC 17025 standards. Providers should recalibrate thermometers based on manufacturer recommendations. The CDC and most manufacturers recommend recalibration every one or two years.

This guide addresses two issues:

- What to do when a manufacturer doesn’t give a recommendation for recalibration.
- The criteria for allowing trained staff to recalibrate thermometers.

When the manufacturer says a thermometer does not need recalibration:

If the owner’s manual and the manufacturer don’t have a recommendation for recalibration:

- The provider is required to recalibrate the thermometer within two years of the purchase date of the thermometer.
- In the case of built-in thermometers, providers must have the thermometer recalibrated within two years of purchase OR purchase a separate thermometer that meets the CDC requirements and can be routinely recalibrated.

Required information on the certificate of calibration:

- If calibrated by an ILAC/MRA accredited laboratory, the certificate must contain:
  - Clearly identifiable laboratory accreditation
  - Name of device
  - Model number
  - Serial number
  - Date of calibration
  - Measurement results indicating unit passed test and uncertainty (recommended uncertainty is +/- 1°F (0.5°C)
- If calibrated by a laboratory that is not accredited by ILAC/MRA, the certificate must contain:
  - Name of device
  - Model number
  - Serial number
  - Date of calibration
  - Measurement results indicating unit passed test and uncertainty (recommended uncertainty is +/- 1°F (0.5°C)
  - Measurement results for the device
  - Statement that calibration testing conforms to ISO 17025

For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY 711).
Organizations that routinely recalibrate medical instruments and have trained calibration staff:

Trained staff can recalibrate or validate thermometers if all of the following criteria are met:

- The person who recalibrates or validates thermometers routinely calibrates other medical instruments for the organization.
- The technician follows ISO 17025 testing standards. Just using a certified ISO 17025 thermometer to compare temperatures does not match ISO 17025 testing standards.
- The technician must create calibration certificates for the thermometers which match Vaccine For Children (VFC) requirements. Work orders are not valid calibration certificates.
  - Exact measurement results must be given on the certificate. Listing only Pass/Fail marks do not show the thermometer’s actual uncertainty range.
  - The certificate must include a business header, as well as the name, title, and qualifications of the staff recalibrating thermometers.
  - The ISO-17025 statement must be visible on the certificate.
- The office has a written policy clearly documenting their practices, how they meet the required standards, and assure assigned staff are qualified to recalibrate medical instruments.
- Notify the Local Health Department or Office of Immunization and Child Profile to assure certificates meet requirements.

For listings of accredited laboratories:

A2LA: http://www.a2la.org/dirsearchnew/newsearch.cfm
L-A-B: http://www.l-a-b.com/content/directory-accredited-labs
AClass: http://www.aclasscorp.com/search-accredited-companies.aspx
IAS: http://www.iasonline.org/Calibration_Laboratories/CL.html
PJLA: http://www.pjlabs.com/search-accredited-labs

A listing of signatory bodies outside of the US can be found on the ILAC website: https://www.ilac.org