

# Philadelphia Immunization Program

## SPECIAL DELIVERY

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health  
Division of Disease Control

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- **Vaccines For Children (VFC) Wastage Policy Update**

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**PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY, AS IT MAY HAVE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR VFC PROVIDERS INCURRING VFC WASTAGE.**

When the Philadelphia VFC program was created in 1994, only a handful of vaccines were included in the childhood and adolescent immunization schedule. Today, 18 years later, VFC offers more than 20 vaccines to providers. These vaccines are not free. The City of Philadelphia purchases vaccines via a federal grant and, in turn, delivers vaccine at no cost to providers. Although the majority of providers are responsible executors of VFC vaccine, clear guidelines regarding negligent waste of vaccine have been established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH). The policy is included in your VFC manual, and reprinted below. At a time when the price of vaccines continues to climb, enforcement of the VFC wastage policy has become essential.

VFC providers experiencing losses due to negligent storage and handling will be expected to replace wasted or spoiled vaccine through private purchase (see VFC manual for more information). The Philadelphia VFC Program understands that some losses (equipment failure and power outages) are unavoidable. However, in other situations, vaccine losses have been due to improper monitoring of storage temperatures, over-ordering, not closing a refrigerator door tightly, or failure to report and return short-dated vaccine, resulting in loss due to expiration.

The VFC Wastage policy is designed to ensure proper accountability of VFC vaccines. Under this policy, providers must:

- Report all vaccine losses to the PDPH VFC program promptly.
- Submit a letter to VFC Program describing the incident on practice letterhead, signed by the head physician.
- Purchase, through the vaccine manufacturer(s), replacement doses for wasted VFC vaccine, as instructed by the VFC Program.
- Submit to the VFC Program a copy of the receipt, showing the vaccines, lot number(s), and number of doses purchased. Proof of payment will be required.
- Use this privately purchased vaccine to vaccinate VFC-eligible patients. The VFC Program may ask to see records documenting administration of this vaccine to VFC-eligible children.

**VFC enrolled providers are responsible for ensuring that their staff take all possible measures to prevent vaccine loss. The following procedures should be followed:**

- Provide adequate vaccine storage, and monitor storage conditions.
- In the case of a vaccine storage problem, do not assume that vaccine is spoiled. Contact the VFC Program immediately for advice before discarding any vaccine.
- Check expiration dates regularly. Rotate vaccine stock regularly by moving the vaccine stock with the earliest expiration dates to the front, and putting the vaccines with the longest expiration dates to the back. *Never use expired vaccines!*
- Report to the VFC Program (via a Short-Dated/Returned Vaccine Report Form) any doses of vaccine that will expire within 60 to 90 days that you will not be able to use prior to expiration (see below for further information on short-dated vaccine below).
- Do not over-order vaccine. Providers should not attempt to stockpile vaccine as a hedge against future shortages. This frequently leads to vaccine wastage, and can contribute to vaccine shortages and limited supply for children needing vaccine in other practices. *Providers should order only enough vaccine to meet their needs for no more than 3 months.*

**Short-Dated Policy and Procedures:**

Short-Dated/ Returned Vaccine Report is a tool provided to assist in prevention of costly vaccine wastage. By reporting your short-dated vaccines to the PDPH Immunization Program, we will be able to transfer the vaccine to another provider, where it can be used prior to expiration. *Providers may not transport vaccine to another location.*

If you have short-dated vaccine and want to ensure that your office is not required to reimburse the VFC program for future loss, you must submit a Short-Dated/Returned Vaccine Report form.

- The form must be sent to VFC 60 to 90 days prior to vaccine expiration.
- These forms must be faxed to Srey Prak at 215-238-6939.
- It is the responsibility of the provider to confirm receipt of Short-Dated/Returned Vaccine Report form.
- Vaccine that a provider projects will not be used MUST be reported 60-90 days before the expiration date.
- Failure to report within the stated timeframe will result in your practice being financially responsible for the expired vaccine.
- Failure to reimburse the PDPH Immunization Program for wasted vaccine will result in VFC Suspension.

The Short-Dated/Returned Vaccine Report form can be found at:

<https://kids.phila.gov/Docs/Short-Dated%20Return%20Vaccine%20Report2011.pdf>