

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)**  
**Massachusetts COVID Vaccine Program (MCVP)**  
**Guidance for Hospitals**  
**November 23, 2020**

The goal of the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccination Program (MCVP) is to protect the residents of the Commonwealth through the safe and efficient administration of COVID-19 vaccine. While exactly when the vaccine will be available is still unknown, hospital health care personnel (HCP) will be among the first recipients of the vaccine, and hospitals must prepare for the receipt and administration of COVID-19 vaccine.

**Health care personnel** include paid or unpaid persons who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to people with COVID-19 or infectious materials.

In order to assist hospitals in preparing for COVID-19 vaccination of HCP, we are providing initial guidance based on the information that is currently available. This information is updated often. Communication with hospitals will continue as new information about the availability of COVID-19 vaccine; the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee; and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and vaccine manufacturers become available.

In the meantime, there are many activities that hospitals can undertake now to prepare for the arrival of the vaccine.

**Please note that this information is preliminary and the details may change.** Always review all guidance that will come with every COVID-19 vaccine delivery to ensure that you are following the most up-to-date guidance for specific vaccine formulations.

**Hospital HCP vaccination planning assumptions:**

- The first doses of COVID-19 vaccine could arrive as soon as mid to late December.
- There are projected to be two vaccine formulations available initially.
- Ancillary kits with supplies to support administration of the vaccine will accompany shipments of COVID-19 vaccine.
- COVID-19 vaccine will be administered intramuscularly (IM).

**Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine**

- Is likely to be the first formulation available.
- Will be shipped in 975-dose increments.
- Requires ultra-cold storage (-60° to -80° C).
  - **Facilities are not required to purchase ultra-cold freezers.**
  - The Pfizer vaccine can be stored at -60° to -80°C for up to 15 days using the thermal shipping container in which it is delivered, as long as the manufacturer's instructions for replenishing the dry ice are strictly adhered to.
  - The Pfizer vaccine can be stored at 2-8° C for up to 5 days (120 hours).

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- Once reconstituted, the vaccine can be at room temperature for up to 6 hours.
- Requires reconstitution with a diluent.
- Requires two doses, 21 days apart.

**NOTE:** Special instructions for using the thermal shipping containers for ultra-cold storage of the Pfizer vaccine can be found starting on p. 6 of this guidance.

<b>Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine Adult Ancillary Kit</b>		
Supports Administration of 975 Doses		
Product	Product Description	Quantity
Needles, for vaccine administration	22 – 25G, 1”	829
Needles, for vaccine administration	22 – 25G, 1.5”	200
Syringes, for vaccine administration	1 ml	1,024
Alcohol pads	Sterile, individual	2,458
Vaccination record card		1,000
Needle guide		10
Face shield		20
Face Mask		40
<b>Diluent vials</b>		200
Needles, for vaccine reconstitution	21 – 25G, 1.5 “	205
Syringes, for vaccine reconstitution	3 ml or 5 ml	205
Pfizer Ancillary Adult Kit Dimensions: 24” x 20” x 24”      Weight: 40 lbs		

**Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine**

- Could ship by late December.
- Will be shipped in 100 dose increments.
- Can be stored frozen at -25° to -15° C for up to 6 months, and can be refrigerated at 2° to 8° C for up to 30 days.
- Does not require reconstitution.
- Requires 2 doses, 28 days apart.

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<b>Standard COVID-19 Vaccine Adult Ancillary Kit</b>		
Supports administration of 100 doses		
Product	Product Description	Quantity
Needles	22 - 25G, 1"	85
Needles	22 - 25G, 1.5"	20
Syringes	1 ml or 3 ml	105
Alcohol pads	Sterile, individual	210
Vaccination record card		100
Needle guide		1
Face shield		2
Face Mask		4
Standard Ancillary Adult Kit Dimensions: 14" x 13" x 9"      Weight: 3.5 lbs		

**Steps to Take to Prepare for Receipt and Administration of COVID-19 Vaccine**

- Identify the lead person at your facility for HCP COVID-19 vaccination planning and implementation.
- Confirm that your facility has signed and electronically submitted the Massachusetts COVID-19 Program (MCVP) Enrollment Form.
  - MDPH Vaccine Unit
    - [dph-vaccine-management@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:dph-vaccine-management@massmail.state.ma.us)
    - (617) 983-6828
- Confirm that your facility is fully registered and on-boarded to submit vaccine-administered data to the Massachusetts Immunization Information (MIIS).
  - MIIS
    - [miishelpdesk@mass.gov](mailto:miishelpdesk@mass.gov)
    - (617) 983-4335
- Review your facility's current emergency HCP vaccination plan and update as needed.
  - Determine if your HCP vaccination program will be located on-site at your facility or off-site, at another location.
  - Resources for clinic planning:
    - *Interim Guidance for Routine and Influenza Immunization Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic* (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html>), especially these sections:

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- General Practices for The Safe Delivery of Vaccination Services
- Additional Considerations for Alternative Vaccination Sites
- Protective Measures for Vaccinating During the Pandemic  
<https://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2009.pdf>
- Guidance for Planning Vaccination Clinics Held at Satellite, Temporary, or Off-Site Locations <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/mass-clinic-activities/index.html>
- CDC's Infection Control Guidance for Healthcare Professionals about Coronavirus (COVID-19) gateway  
page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html>
- Establish or review security procedures for the vaccine.
- Review your process for annual employee influenza vaccination and identify what needs to be changed or enhanced for COVID-19 vaccination. Differences between annual influenza vaccination and COVID-19 vaccination include:
  - Strict requirements for storage and handling of COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Both the Pfizer and the Moderna products require 2 doses:
    - In all cases, **the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose must be the same formulation as the first dose.**
    - Schedule the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose when administering the first dose.
    - Develop a system for recalling vaccinees for 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.
    - Provide 2<sup>nd</sup> dose reminders through:
      - Personal COVID-19 vaccination card
      - Employee email
      - Text messages or phone calls
      - Posters
    - **Do not plan to hold COVID-19 vaccine in reserve for 2<sup>nd</sup> doses.** Second doses are being withheld by the federal government and will be shipped as needed for the second dose.
  - COVID-19 vaccine will be made available through Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), which will require a different information sheet from the traditional Vaccine Information Statement (VIS). This will become available when the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) issues the EUA.
  - Enhanced vaccine safety monitoring
    - **Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)**
      - <https://vaers.hhs.gov/resources/infoproviders.html>

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- **V-SAFE:** A new smartphone-based, after-vaccination health checker for people who receive COVID-19 vaccines. V-SAFE will use text messaging and web surveys from CDC to check in with vaccine recipients for health problems following COVID-19 vaccination. The system also will provide telephone follow up to anyone who reports medically significant (important) adverse events. More information about V-safe will available soon.
- Identify the first 975 HCP at your facility who will receive COVID-19 vaccine, then the next 975, etc.
- Determine whether or not your facility will vaccinate **HCP** from other facilities or practices and, if so, which ones.
- Prepare facility for storage and handling of vaccine.
  - The CDC Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit has been updated to include a COVID-19 Vaccine Storage and Handling Addendum with information on storage and handling best practices for COVID-19 vaccines. This addendum will be updated with specific information for COVID-19 vaccine product.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/index.html>
    - Please sign up for email alerts on this page to be notified when updates are made, or check this website often.
  - COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers will also provide video and written guidance on the storage and handling of their product. All staff involved in the storage, handling and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine should review the video and written guidance.
  - Ensure all staff that might handle or administer the Pfizer vaccine receives appropriate training on handling dry ice.
  - Ensure availability of supplies for safe handling of dry ice and vaccine vials stored at ultra-cold temperatures.
- Prepare clinical staff to administer COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Review manufacturer-supplied videos and written guidance (when available)
  - Access MDPH and/or CDC-developed training on COVID-19 Vaccine prior to the vaccine becoming available.
  - Skills Checklist for Vaccine Administration  
<https://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p7010.pdf>
- Prepare HCP for vaccination by providing them with information about the vaccine.
  - CDC COVID-19 Vaccine. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
  - HCP COVID-19 vaccination is voluntary.

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**Recommendations for Using Thermal Shipping Containers as Temporary Storage of the Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine**

Facilities without ultra-cold freezer capacity can use the thermal shipping containers in which the vaccine arrives to store COVID-19 vaccine.

- Materials needed:
  - Safety glasses
  - Carton sealing tape
  - Dry ice pellets (10 – 16 mm) for the second and third recharges
- The thermal shipping container is a passive device that contains dry ice as the mechanism to maintain the required temperatures when maintained properly as defined by the manufacturer’s instructions. The dry ice in the shipping container will deplete over a number of days (duration will vary depending on use and care), which will impact how long the shipping container holds the temperature. This differs from ultra-low-temperature freezers, an active device, which, when plugged in, is designed to maintain ultra-low temperatures indefinitely. The longer the thermal shipping container remains closed, the longer it will take for the dry ice to deplete.
- Store the thermal shipping container at 15° to 25° C (59° to 77° F).
- The shipping container requires 23 kgs of dry ice pellets (10mm – 16 mm pellets). Upon receipt and after opening, inspect the box and replenish with dry ice within 24 hours of receipt by adding dry ice to the maximum within the payload insert areas and dry ice pod.
- Re-ice the thermal shipping container every 5 days. This will maintain the level of dry ice and the temperature of the vaccine.
  - Do not open the thermal shipping container more than 2 times a day.
  - Do not leave it open for more than 3 minutes at a time.
- Use local dry ice suppliers for re-icing the thermal shipping container.
- Use ultra-low temperature monitoring devices (probe or probeless) capable of being used with dry ice. Place the temperature-monitoring device in the location of the vial tray payload area within the thermal shipping container.
- Return the thermal shipping container within 20 business days of delivery, according to the manufacturers’ instructions.
- **First dry ice recharge**
  - Dry ice for the **first** dry ice recharge for the Pfizer product will be provided, and will include a starter kit (gloves, scoop, instructions).
  - This will be auto-ordered with vaccine.
  - Sites may opt out of receiving dry ice.

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- Additional details on dry ice operations and ordering will be forthcoming.
- Facilities are responsible for obtaining dry ice for the second and third recharges.
- **Thermal shipping container temperature monitoring device**
  - For Pfizer thermal shipping containers, temperature device will deactivate at time of product receipt.
  - For sites using the thermal shipping container as a storage unit, the temperature monitoring smart device may be **reactivated** for continued use for duration of product storage and handling.
  - Additional details on reactivation process and monitoring device plan will be forthcoming. <sup>[SEP]</sup>

For questions about enrolling with MDPH to receive COVID-19 vaccine, contact the MDPH Vaccine Unit at:

- [dph-vaccine-management@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:dph-vaccine-management@massmail.state.ma.us)
- (617) 983-6828

For questions about registering with the MIIS, contact the MIIS at:

- [miishelpdesk@mass.gov](mailto:miishelpdesk@mass.gov)
- (617) 983-4335

For questions about COVID-19 vaccine administration or planning and implementing temporary or off site clinics, please contact the MDPH Immunization Division at [COVID-19-Vaccine-Plan-MA@mass.gov](mailto:COVID-19-Vaccine-Plan-MA@mass.gov).