

Standard Intent:

Vaccine storage and handling are key components in maintaining the efficacy of immunization programs. Vaccines are biological substances that may lose their effectiveness quickly if they become too hot or too cold at any time, especially during transport and storage. Storage outside of the recommended temperature range, including during transport and storage, may speed up loss of potency, which cannot be reversed. Inappropriate storage may result in vaccines wastage, or if undetected, failure of the vaccine to protect. Due to the delicate nature of vaccines, continuous monitoring of temperature is indicated. The devastating effect of electric power outage shall be mitigated through connection of vaccine refrigerators to emergency power supply. To avoid contamination, refrigerated medications, biologicals and vaccines shall not be stored with food, drinks, biological samples, and culture media in the same refrigerator.

Refrigerated and frozen pharmaceuticals must be secured and access be limited to authorized personnel only. Routine inspection of refrigerated and frozen pharmaceuticals by qualified pharmacy staff is indicated to ensure compliance with given standards. The objectives of drug storage shall be to ensure stock security and the maintenance of the quality of drugs throughout their shelf life.

MM.13 The hospital has a safe and secure system for the storage and safe management of hazardous medications and pharmaceutical chemicals.

- MM.13.1 There is a written policy on proper storage and handling of hazardous medications and pharmaceutical chemicals.
- MM.13.2 The hospital has a list of hazardous medications and pharmaceutical chemicals in areas where they are stored or used.
- MM.13.3 Hazardous medications and pharmaceutical chemicals are stored separately on low shelves and in the original labeled containers.
- MM.13.4 Flammables and volatile substances are stored in appropriate safety cabinets in well ventilated areas.
- MM.13.5 Spill kits and personal protective equipment are readily available.
- MM.13.6 For staff involved in the handling of chemicals and hazardous medications (such as chemotherapeutic agents) who are attempting to conceive, pregnant, or breast feeding, a structured process is in place to review potential exposure risks and offer alternative work assignment.
- MM.13.7 Material safety data sheets (MSDS) for all available hazardous medications and pharmaceutical chemicals are available and accessible to staff.