

**HACKETTSTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY MANUAL**

REFRIGERATORS - FREEZERS

Effective Date: 10/01	Policy No: FA17
Cross Referenced:	Origin: Patient Care
Reviewed Date: 03/02, 05/03, 09/04, 05/05, 03/08, 12/09, 1/11	Authority: President
Revised Date: 01/11, 3/2015	Page: 1 of 4

SCOPE

All refrigerators and freezers utilized to store blood, breast milk, medications, patient nourishment, plasma or reagents, specimens or tissue.

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for the proper and safe storage of blood, breast milk, medications, patient nourishment, plasma or reagents, specimens or tissues which require refrigeration or freezing.

POLICY

Blood, medications, patient food and nutrition products, breast milk, plasma and laboratory reagents and specimens and tissue will be stored under proper conditions of sanitation, temperature, light, moisture, ventilation, and security to maintain product stability.

RESPONSIBILITY

Table 1

Refrigerator/Freezer Type	Responsible Department
Blood & Plasma	Lab
Breast Milk	OB
Lab Reagents & Specimens	Lab
Medication & Vaccine Refrigerator	Temperature Monitoring: Pharmacy AND Nursing Unit or Department where refrigerator/freezer is located Cleaning/Defrosting: Pharmacy
Patient Nutrition	Dietary
Tissue	Lab

PROCEDURE

I. General Information

- A. Separate refrigerators and/or freezers are provided for blood, medications, lab reagents and specimens, patient and employee food and nutrition products, breast milk, and tissue.
- B. Pharmacy refrigerators and freezers are labeled to indicate allowed contents.
- C. Temperature is maintained according to the following scale:

Table 2

Refrigerator/Freezer Type	Refrigerator Temperature Range	Freezer Temperature Range
Blood	36° to 43° F = 2° to 6° C	
Breast Milk	33° to 39° F = 0° to 3.9° C	
Medication/Vaccine Refrigerator	36° to 46° F = 2° to 8° C	-4° to 14° F = -20° to -10° C
Patient Nutrition	32° to 40° F = 0° to 4° C	-10° to 5° F = -23° to -15° C
Lab Specimen & Reagent	36° to 43° F = 2° to 6° C	-4° to 14° F = -20° to -10° C

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Plasma	n/a	Less than -18° C
Tissue & Anticoagulation Reagent	n/a	Less than -70° C

II. Monitoring

A. Equipment used to monitor/record temperatures

- a) Refrigerators and freezers containing any of the stated items shall be monitored in accordance with required regulations and according to the Departmental SOP.

B. Frequency of monitoring

- a) Refrigerators/freezers are monitored in accordance with all standards and regulations that apply to their contents.

Table 3

REFRIGERATOR CONTENTS	MONITORING FREQUENCY
Blood	Continuous
Breast Milk	Daily
Laboratory Reagents & specimens	Daily
Medications	Once daily
Vaccines	Twice daily
Patient food and nutrition items	Daily
Plasma & Tissues	Continuous

III. Corrective Action:

A. General Information

1. Corrective action is taken **immediately** when temperatures are found outside of ranges in Table 2, either by a temperature reading or when a temperature alarm sounds.
2. Corrective action is the responsibility of the department in which the refrigerator/freezer resides.
3. If staff in the department where the refrigerator/ freezer is located cannot take and document corrective action immediately, the department responsible for the refrigerator/freezer must be contacted.
4. If the responsible department is not staffed twenty-four hours a day, the Administrative Coordinator is contacted when immediate action cannot be taken by the department where the refrigerator resides.

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- B. Actions (sequential) to be taken when temperature is out of range in refrigerators/freezers with Free-standing Thermometers**
1. Action is taken immediately at any time that the temperature is noted to be out of range
 2. The refrigerator/freezer door is checked to ensure that it is closed properly and that the door seals are functioning.
 3. The thermometer is checked for appropriate location, relocated, if necessary, to the central part of the refrigerator, and the temperature rechecked in 30 minutes.
 4. If the temperature remains out of range, the responsible department (see Table 1), is notified and contacts the Maintenance department or the vendor for service or repairs.
 5. If the Maintenance Department (or vendor) cannot respond within 1 hour of the time the temperature was noted to be out of range, action is taken according to the responsible department's policy/ SOP.
- C. Actions to be taken when temperature is out of range in refrigerators/freezers with Digital Temperature Alarms (including Central Alarms)**
1. Action is taken immediately any time an alarm sounds.
 2. Follow instructions according to the responsible department's policy/ SOP (see Table 1).
- D. Actions to be taken when temperature is out of range in refrigerators/freezers with Continuous Circular Chart Recorders or Pyxis Smart-Remote™ thermometer**
1. Action is taken immediately at any time that the temperature is noted to be out of range
 2. Follow instructions in responsible department's policy/ SOP (see Table 1).

IV. Cleaning and Defrosting

- A. Cleaning and defrosting will be done in accordance with the responsible department's policy/SOP.

V. Documentation

- A. Temperature, cleaning, and defrosting logs and records are provided by the responsible department according to that department's policies and procedures (see Table 1).
- B. A temperature log is provided by the responsible department (see Table 1) Documentation of refrigerator and freezer temperatures, action taken and resolution of out-of-range temperatures, cleaning, and defrosting, is completed immediately by the staff of the department where the refrigerator/freezer is located, or by the responsible department (see Table 1).
- C. Completed documentation will be kept by the responsible department for a minimum of three (3) years.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Staff Refrigerators and Freezers:

A. Temperature Ranges

Refrigerator Temperature Range: $\leq 46^{\circ}$ F

Freezer Temperature Range: $\leq 32^{\circ}$ F

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B. Monitoring Equipment

Free-standing thermometers are utilized and should be located in the center of the refrigerator/freezer

C. Monitoring/Cleaning Responsibility and Frequency

The department in which staff refrigerators and/or freezers are located is responsible for cleaning and/or defrosting and temperature monitoring.

REFERENCES

Pharmacy Policy 7710.03-04
Pharmacy Nursing Policy PN.07B
OB and L&D Polices: 6170.033a
Nutritional Care Services Policy 8340.017e
Laboratory Services Policies