 <p>Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg Caring for Health À l'écoute de notre santé</p> <p>OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE</p>	TITLE SAFE TRANSPORTATION OF IMMUNIZATION SUPPLIES	
	Approved by: Population Public Health / OESH	Pages: 1
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PURPOSE: the purpose of this guidance document is to provide direction for all staff members on how to safely transport immunization supplies to immunization sites.

SCOPE: this guideline will provide support and direction for all staff (PHN, immunization admin and casual immunization nurses) that are involved in transporting supplies or setting up immunization clinics.

BACKGROUND: assist the WRHA Population Public Health Immunization team to safely transport supplies to and from school and outreach immunization clinics in various community settings. Provide consistent information to all community areas so that all staff utilize transport equipment to support safe ergonomics and minimize risk for injury. Review best practice for packing supplies and mobilizing equipment with lifting, pushing/pulling techniques with recommendations from the WRHA OESH.

Supplies transported to clinic; Clerical bag, Coolers (hard or soft shell), Immunization supplies, folding hand truck and tool kits. The following are general recommendations for carrying, lifting, pushing and pulling of supplies transported to immunization clinics.

PROCEDURE:

When scheduling the visit, the Public Health Nurse (PHN) should request equipment and personnel from the site to assist with transporting supplies if working alone or more assistance needed. The PHN should also ask if transporting on stairs is required.

In situations where parking is at a distance from service delivery site, and if an assigned second person is available (PHN, volunteer on site), assigned second person can assist PHN with unloading/handling supplies in front of site so that the PHN can park vehicle after unloading.

Use of equipment for transporting supplies (e.g., cart, dolly, hand truck, etc.) is always recommended to decrease the distance a load being carried, especially if supplies are large/bulky/heavy and/or if multiple items need to be moved at once. This helps reduce the risk of injury due to awkward postures/movements and/or forceful exertions when transporting items. Additional trips may be required to transfer/transport items in a safe ergonomic manner.

Reduce supplies to what is needed to reduce load. Do not overpack supplies.



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General recommendations for lifting equipment:

- Prior to lifting, use both hands to check the weight or ease of carrying of the supplies. If the weight is too heavy or awkward, ask for help.
- Plan the route and remove any obstacles.
- Decrease the distance the load is carried and use equipment whenever possible (e.g., cart, dolly, etc.)
- As a general guideline, 50lb limit for lifting by one person. If supplies are very heavy, awkward/ bulky or have no handles, the limit would be lower. In these cases, supplies should be lifted by two people. *(See Appendix A: image showing proper body mechanics on how to safely lift cooler with two people).*
- Keep the object you are lifting directly in front, close to the body and between mid-thigh to chest level.
- Use a wide stance with feet at least shoulder width apart and lift using your legs. Keep the back straight, tighten your abdominals, bend at the hips and knees and keep your head up.
- Grasp the object with both hands using the whole hand and not just your fingers. Keep the wrists straight. Use handles if available.
- Turn by taking small steps with your feet. Avoid twisting.
- Avoid rapid and jerky movements

Specific

- When having to carry/transport heavy/ awkward or multiple supplies at once, using two bags as opposed to one can also be considered to prevent overfilling single bag. Both bags should be equal in weight to distribute the weight more evenly between both sides of the body (i.e. one bag held in each hand).
- Instead of regularly carrying bag with the same hand (or shoulder), it is recommended for staff to switch sides often and carry/sling bag with opposite arm/shoulder.
- When moving with bag, shoulders should be retracted (pulled back) while keeping head up. If using strap, strap should be long enough so that strap can go over opposite shoulder to distribute the weight of the bag more evenly.
- When donning/doffing handbag onto and off of body, both hands should be used.
- For loading and unloading immunization supplies from a vehicle supplies can be loaded into trunk or back seat depending on vehicle and circumstances; (Supplies/bag should be stored in these areas rather than floor to minimize lifting loads from low heights)
- Get as close as possible to trunk and pull items to you before lifting.
- When picking up supplies, lift objects using slow controlled movements and bend at the knees rather than the waist to avoid stooping

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(See Appendix B: image showing ways to carry bag from most unfavorable method to most favorable method).

(See Appendix C: image showing proper body alignment for loading/unloading supplies to/from truck of vehicle).

General recommendations for Pushing and Pulling: Folding hand truck, rolling tool kit, dolly or suitcase

- Plan the route before moving the object. Remove obstacles. (i.e. closed doorways)
- Make sure you can see where you are going.
- Push before you pull whenever possible.
- Ask for help if the weight is too heavy or awkward.
- Grasp the object with both hands as close to waist height as possible. Use handles if available. Keep your wrists straight.
- Push the object by weight shifting through the legs (from the back foot to the front foot).
- Keep elbows close to your body. Do not push or pull with arms out from the side or behind your body.
- While moving, turn by taking small steps with your feet or push from the side to avoid twisting.
- Place one foot in front of the other. Keep your back straight, tighten your abdominals and keep your head up.
- Perform all movements slowly and carefully. Avoid quick and jerky movements. Avoid rapid and jerky movements.
- When going down ramps, go forward and ask for assistance if load is heavier.


(See Appendix D: image showing proper body mechanic technique for pushing cooler)

Specific

- If the handle of cooler/ suitcase/ toolbox is too low and requires you to bend over while moving, use a cart or dolly or folding hand truck. *(See Appendix E image)*

General recommendations for carrying equipment upstairs:

- Avoid stairs whenever possible, and use ramps/elevators (i.e. more even/flat surfaces).
- If stairs are ONLY option, consideration can be made to providing staff with low capacity cooler with an appropriate handle at a reasonable height. to allow for good grip and so that other hand and grab/hold onto stair rail).
- When ascending/descending stairs, staff should to use railing for support and move slowly while taking one step at a time. NOTE: When using stairs, supplies should be kept to a low weight to allow for only one arm lifting.


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Specific:

- Use of large hard cooler is not recommended on the stairs even with two people carrying so recommendation would be for staff to use a dolly to ascend or descend or to reduce weight of load by packing/storing less items in one or two smaller coolers with an appropriate handle.

Specific recommendations for Coolers (with vaccine-hard and soft)

- Cold chain protocol- Vaccines and Biologics can be found here: [Packing, Storage and Handling for Off-Site Immunization Clinics – Cold Chain Protocol | Health | Province of Manitoba \(gov.mb.ca\)](https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/public-health/cold-chain-protocol/)

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Appendix A: Image showing proper body mechanic technique for safely lifting cooler with two people



Appendix B: Image showing ways to carry bag from unfavorable to favorable method



Unfavorable  Favorable

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Appendix C: Image showing proper body mechanic technique for loading/unloading supplies to/from truck of vehicle



Appendix D: Image showing proper body mechanic technique for how to push cooler



Appendix E: Folding hand truck



LEAD AUTHOR(S)

Jamie Boyer RNBN, Michely Burger RNBN, Angie Rebeck RNBN, Chris Doms O.T. Reg. (MB), MOT, B.Sc., Theresa Janzen RNBN