

October 1, 2024

Bulletin: Shipping and Temperature Control of Medications

Situation: Given the importance of temperature control for medications, the Product Distribution Center (PDC) is switching the shipping of most accounts to ambient shipping/heated service shipping. Some regions will not have access to ambient shipping/heated shipping service and will continue to have regular shipping for their PDC orders.

Background:

In 2022 the HBSP and the PDC began a quality improvement project related to safe transportation and temperature control of medications. To understand the scope of the issue, the PDC trialed a process of inserting freeze indicators into packages to alert midwives that the contents had frozen and to track the number of shipments that were impacted by freezing.

During this time the PDC began exploring what shipping options there are available in BC to address temperature stability for HBSP shipments.

Assessment and Plan:

During the trial period during the 2023/2024 cold season, there were that 12 orders where the freeze indicators identified that they had been exposed to freezing. These twelve orders were from regions where the proposed ambient shipping company will be able to service. The trial period has concluded and freeze indicators will no longer be included in packages.

The selection of the service for shipping was done by posting the procurement on BC Bid and ATS applied. To our knowledge they have the most extensive service area currently available.

Some of the Communities Where Temperature Controlled Shipping is Not Available:

GOLDEN
HAZELTON
MASSET
PORT ALBERNI
PORT HARDY
POWELL RIVER

QUEEN CHARLOTTE
SALT SPRING ISLAND
SMITHERS
SOOKE

This is the list of communities, with existing midwifery PDC accounts, where temperature controlled shipping is not available. If midwives establish practice in a new rural or remote community the PDC will be able to confirm if temperature controlled shipping will be available to that area. A list of locations with ATS service/no service will be added on the PDC shopping cart.

Request and Response:

Communities where temperature controlled shipping is available: Continue to order medications on an as needed basis.

Communities where temperature controlled shipping is NOT available: Please make sure you order the required medication from PDC before the start of the cold to avoid the risk of cold damage to the medication during transport.

If you urgently require medication and need to order during the cold months, if feasible, you can provide an alternative shipping address that has this service available. Please send your order for the new address to PDCCustomerSer@gov.bc.ca

Resources and References:

Midwifery Best Practices in Materials Management Course. UBC CPD Midwifery. [Materials Management | UBC CPD](#)

Contact:

[Lisa Sutherland](#) RM, IBCLC, Provincial Midwifery Lead, PSBC

