

COVID-19 vaccine distribution during the Norwegian winter

No journey is straightforward in Norway. It's the northernmost of the Nordic countries, with a rugged coastline broken by huge fjords, numerous lakes and thousands of islands.

Just after Christmas in 2020, Norway started distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine as part of its national immunization program. Working with regional health authorities, county governors and hospital pharmacies to establish a safe and reliable solution, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) manages the receipt, storage and supply of the products, so residents won't need to travel far to get vaccinated.

Scenario: Racing against time under hazardous weather conditions

In winter, much of Norway transforms into a snow-clad landscape and the average temperature is -7°C . Given the geography, some areas – only accessible by ferry or crossing a mountain pass – become almost out of reach.

However, the NIPH needs to reach the most inaccessible areas to ensure the timely rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine program. Their mission? Securing the delivery of their stock from 14 locations across the country to more than 350 sites, on a weekly basis, during one of the most challenging times of the year, also known as the "Viking season".

To ensure as many doses as possible are administered during the very short shelf life of the product, after thawing, while maintaining an unbroken cold chain, the NIPH entrusts World Courier – its official domestic distribution supplier in case of a pandemic outbreak since 2016 – with the critical task of the vaccine logistics.



Taking the unexpected in our stride

Key facts



Norway

-7°C

Average external temperature

5,4M

Population (2020)

2-8°C

Temperature requirement

14 locations

Origin

350+ sites

Destination

~ 500-600 per week

Shipment volume

**National vaccine
program completion**

Timeframe

Solution: Compliance, consistency and flexibility

World Courier developed rigorous yet flexible planning ensuring on-time delivery of the time- and temperature-sensitive vaccines to the different sites across the country, week after week. We teamed up with Jetpak, a local logistics company, to complete the last mile deliveries of the more than 500 weekly shipments.

Using a combination of Global Thermal Containers (GTC 12L) with Phase Change Material and active containers, PharmaCube, we provide a GDP-compliant transport solution at the required temperature of 2-8°C.

We start the day before, with the preconditioning, security checking and loading of the packaging, followed by the PharmaCube units plugging into the vehicles' specially rigged electrical system early next morning. Our teams on the ground are sometimes required to review their well-defined roadmap because of unexpected weather events, but they always respond with innovative and versatile alternatives to ensure no delay jeopardizes the municipalities' local vaccination programs.

Outcome: The ability to think out of the box and never give up

A severe storm lashed Norway, making it impossible for a daily ferry to reach remote islands in the northern region putting the quality of the precious cargo we were transporting at risk. Our teams went above and beyond by chartering a local shuttle-boat and setting sail with the skipper to ensure same-day delivery as planned.

And when a 30-minute drive to reach a small fishing village turned into a 5-hour trip behind a snow plough because of a winter blizzard, our teams used their intuition and unconventional thinking by sourcing a snow mobile back-up to meet the delivery window.

Summary

At World Courier we plan for every eventuality and we take the unexpected in our stride, delivering robust logistics solutions – regardless of extreme weather conditions. We hold ourselves to a higher standard because we understand how precious your shipments are. This is why we are committed to ensuring end-to-end product safety and never giving up until your shipment is safely delivered.

For end-to-end visibility and security for the transportation of your vaccine shipments, [contact us to learn more about our solutions.](#)