

**The chill factor:**

# Mastering logistical challenges for vaccine distribution in Norway's 'Viking season'

No journey is straightforward in Norway. Being the northernmost of the Nordic countries, it features a rugged coastline broken by huge fjords, numerous lakes, and thousands of islands.

## The situation

**In 2020, just after Christmas, Norway began distributing the COVID-19 vaccine as part of its national immunization program.**

The Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) collaborated with regional health authorities, county governors, and hospital pharmacies. Their goal was to establish a safe and dependable solution for managing the receipt, storage, and supply of the vaccines. This ensured that residents would not have to travel far to get vaccinated.

### **A race against time under hazardous weather conditions**

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

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

Since 2016, World Courier has been designated as the official domestic vaccine logistics provider for Norway. This partnership came into critical importance during the pandemic, ensuring as many doses as possible were administered within the short shelf life of the product after thawing, all while maintaining an unbroken cold chain.





## The solution



**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.

With winters being so harsh in Norway, there was a severe risk of vaccines being frozen and rendered useless. Using a combination of the replenishable global thermal containers (GTC) and active containers called PharmaCube, we provided a good distribution practice (GDP) compliant transport solution that could sustain the required temperature range of +2°C to +8°C.

Preparations had begun the day before, which involved securing and loading packaging, along with connecting PharmaCube units to the vehicles' specially engineered electrical systems early in the morning. There were instances when our teams on the ground had to revise their meticulously planned roadmaps due to unexpected weather conditions. However, they consistently devised innovative and flexible solutions to ensure that no delays would compromise the local vaccination programs in various municipalities.

## The outcome

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 five-hour trip behind a snow plough because of a winter blizzard, our teams used their initiative and unconventional thinking by sourcing a snow mobile back-up to meet the delivery window.

Our efforts contributed to an exceptionally high vaccination rate across the country. Towards the conclusion of the vaccination program (November 2021), Norway's single vaccination rate for people aged 18 and over was 91.7%, while the double vaccination rate was 87.6% (source: [LTCCovid](#)).

### Embrace the unexpected: Robust logistics for every eventuality

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.



**-7°C**

Average external  
winter temperature



**5.4m**

Population  
(as of 2020)



**+2 to +8°C**

Vaccine temperature  
requirement



**14**

Distribution centers  
collected from



**350+**

Vaccination sites  
delivered to



**500 – 600**

Shipments per  
week



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World Courier

**World Courier is a leading global distribution logistics company offering innovative, customized, and scalable product transport and distribution services.**

With temperature-control packaging, monitoring technology, and over 50 years of experience, our highly experienced team can help you navigate the logistic complexities of your next project.

**[Contact us](#) today about your specialty logistics requirements.**