

Storage and Warehousing

Overview

This entry will provide an overview of warehousing and inventory of common supplies and materials, and of the equipment needed for emergency mobilization/deployment. It is important to consult and comply with IOM's Warehouse Manual available in the Guidance Documents and Tools for Procurement and Logistics entry.

Emergency supplies must be properly stored until distributed. During the immediate response, temporary collection storage can be used for stockpiling emergency supplies until appropriate space can be found. Even though choices could be limited, the Procurement Officer in coordination with the Chief of Mission (COM) should find appropriate storage space according to the emergency items to be stored. The size of storage facilities is of importance. These facilities must be accessible during all seasons. Stock cards and forms should be in place to control stock inflows and outflows. The Country Office must ensure that the IOM Warehouse operations and management are carried out in the most efficient, effective and ethical manner.

Key Points

- The establishment of a warehouse must be approved by the Chief of Mission (COM)/delegate with technical input from the Procurement Officer and the Global Procurement and Supply Unit (GPSU).
- Ensure segregation of duties in the procurement functions.
- GPSU in Manila is responsible for maintaining the warehouse policies and assisting offices particularly in the area of warehousing.

Scope and Application

Warehouse Operation Process

The warehouse must be secured and items of stock insured against risk of theft or loss. The COM/Procurement Officer should also consider the recruitment of a Warehouse Assistant tasked to maintain and handle emergency supplies in the warehouse area. Security personnel should also be hired to guard the supplies.

As a rule, never mix products of a different sort on the same rack, pallet, or pile. In particular, hazardous materials should not be stored in the same place as food and other products for human consumption or use.

Where the Country Office establishes its own warehouse(s), a warehouse management system should be put in place to cover inventory control, monitoring, reporting and storage facilities. A warehouse can be managed through an in-house developed database with the help of an inventory software programme or manually with the help of stock cards. It is essential that management and handling are properly documented.

Procedures for arrival and dispatch should be set in advance by the COM/Procurement Officer and be well understood by staff charged with the responsibility of warehouse management.

Goods Receipt Process

- Whether goods are purchased locally or internationally proper packing and labelling are essential.
- Ensure the information is provided in advance of shipment. The consignee should normally be the COM/Procurement Officer.
- A packing list /manifest should be sent in advance including notification of the estimated date and time of arrival.
- The COM/Procurement Officer should ensure advance arrangements with the relevant authorities and freight companies necessary for rapid handling of supplies procured internationally. This should include clearance

procedures and duty exemptions.

- All costs associated with handling, customs clearance, onward transportation should be adequately budgeted for.
- Once goods have been received, a request for security clearance via UNDSO or other system in place should follow.
- Where necessary the Procurement Officer should recruit casual labourers to offload/load the consignment. A food-for-work arrangement can be a good option for providing in kind payment to beneficiaries.
- The Procurement Officer should inspect goods on arrival, check for quantities and quality as well as damages if any. In case of any damages, the supplier shall be notified immediately and a claim lodged. The claim should include all costs incurred in handling the shipment. It is advisable to open a separate file for each specific case and for future verification.
- Following the goods receipt process, a Goods Received Note should then be raised by the procurement focal point in charge of the warehouse.
- The requesting unit should be notified of the items received into the warehouse so that they can also confirm that the goods are in good order.
- Stock cards should be updated following confirmation. The information should be then entered into the warehouse database and updated by the Logistics Assistant for stocks control purposes.

Dispatch Process

- The requesting unit should raise the Warehouse release note for stocks withdrawal which should also be approved by the COM/authorized delegate.
- The requisition note is submitted to the Warehouse for the release of the goods.
- Goods are dispatched and checked for accuracy by the Warehouse Assistant.
- Acknowledgement of receipt is signed by the person collecting the goods and the note is filed in the release note file.
- During dispatch attention should be paid to items that are nearest to their expiry dates.
- Every dispatch must be recorded and the manual stock card must be updated immediately by the Warehouse Assistant. The warehouse database should also be updated accordingly.
- Weekly warehouse stock reports should be sent to programme managers and to cluster leads informing them of the stock status.
- Items returned to the warehouse as not having been distributed should be recorded as returns and the records updated.
- Supplies delivered should be verified. For items distributed directly to beneficiary, the beneficiary list should be submitted back to the Warehouse Assistant for record keeping.

Control Systems

It is the responsibility of the COM/Procurement Officer to control and monitor supplies to prevent loss or diversion.

- Only authorized personnel should have access to the warehouse facilities.
- The keys to the warehouse must be strictly controlled.
- The warehouse must be properly guarded seven days a week.
- Storage areas must be secured against break-ins.
- The arrival of goods must be recorded in the inventory.
- Stock control cards must be available for each product.
- The "First in, first out" principle should be applied.
- Regular inventory checks should be performed.

Inventory

The COM is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date inventory list at all times. The list should contain items of emergency supplies such as NFIs, shelter materials, drugs, etc. Reports on stock levels, movements, losses, damage and distribution must be tracked using an inventory system. The inventory system should identify what has been ordered and distributed; which donor/sponsor procured the items; and the items delivered and balance available. The report should provide information with all the required information to fulfill reporting obligation.

To facilitate standard transmission to the Accounting (ACO) Department at Headquarters as part of the year end accounting procedures, the inventory is prepared in principle on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet by the Warehouse Assistant which has to be verified by the Procurement Officer and approved by the COM. The COM/Delegate shall do a physical inventory control before the inventory list is submitted to ACO. All inventory items must have IOM stickers and must be entered into the inventory list. Please refer to the Warehouse Stock List Available in the Guidance Documents and Tools for Procurement and Logistics entry.

Key Considerations

- The COM shall be responsible and accountable in the overall management of the warehouse.
- COM should ensure that emergency stock is available to meet the needs of beneficiaries to avoid stock out.
- Procurement Officer should constantly liaise with programme staff to keep abreast of changing needs and priorities during emergencies.

Relevance to IOM's Emergency Operations

Emergency supplies can come from different sources. The Procurement Officer needs to consider the different options of sourcing and choose the most appropriate one, including global stocks. The use of global vendors may already be in place including Long Term Agreements (LTAs) that can support immediate delivery of emergency items. Humanitarian depots and other humanitarian actors can also be utilized to source emergency supplies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) who have warehouses strategically located.

Other Entries in this Topic

- [Shelter and NFI](#)

Contacts

For more information and guidance contact the Supply Chain Division: SCD@iom.int.

DFM Emergency Support, can also provide additional support and information as needed: DFMES@iom.int.

Document last updated: Jan 2023