

Transport and Distribution

Overview

This section focuses on transport and distribution of emergency supplies during an emergency.

During emergency operations, transport and distribution activities can vary depending on the scale and nature of the crisis and on IOM's strategy for response. Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for NFI distributions are available in the Guidance Documents and Tools for Shelter and NFI entry. The SOPs provide guidance on administrative requirements, assessments, distribution and post distribution monitoring (PDM) relating to the distribution of non-food items (NFIs). The SOPs can be used to guide the development and implementation of distribution activities. These tools should be adapted to suit the context of each crisis response.

Key Points

- Transport and distribution process should be planned and managed efficiently to maximize the emergency response and minimize losses.
- Transport and distribution should be responsive, timely, transparent and safe.
- The emergency response plan should be included as part of all transport and distribution planning.
- Do not hesitate to seek support from the Global Procurement and Supply Unit (GPSU) and the DRM Crisis Support team.

Scope and Application

Transporting Emergency Supplies

Emergency supplies must be protected against damage, theft and other risks. Emergency operations are carried out in difficult conditions whereby certain roads maybe be destroyed or where the political situation is unstable. All vehicles used in the transportation of goods/ supplies should have cargo insurance. If vehicles are rented, then the company should submit a copy of the cargo insurance policy. The Chief of Mission/Procurement Officer, in coordination with the designated security focal person, should reinforce all security and protection measures to guarantee the safe arrival of supplies/goods at final destination. For international transport, the COM/Procurement Officer should make prior arrangements with the relevant authorities for priority clearance and duty exemptions.

Given the complexities involved, the following measures apply:

- The COM should ensure sufficient funding availability and that all transport needs are adequately budgeted.
- For in country transportation of emergencies supplies and for security reasons, the COM/Procurement Officer should ensure that travel is carried out during day light hours.
- Safety norms must be established in advance by the COM/Procurement Officer and understood by all staff involved in the operation (maximum speed limit, care and safety of the supplies, itinerary, communication protocols etc.) to ensure security of staff and supplies.
- The Procurement Officer should ensure that the vehicles being used to transport items are in good mechanical condition and thoroughly checked before departure.
- The Procurement Officer should check with the security focal person on the rules of displaying IOM logos on the vehicles to avoid security risks.
- Drivers must carry a copy of the load manifest and the official authorization to transport supplies/goods in case this might be required by authorities along the route.
- The COM/Procurement Officer should establish communication protocol between departure and destination points.

- As a general principle, the safest route must be chosen. Any deviation from the agreed upon route must be immediately communicated to the COM/Procurement Officer.
- Ensure that sufficient drivers are hired to avoid staff burnout. Drivers must be trained to fully understand IOM procedures. They should undergo the medical check for drivers.
- A system must be established to monitor and control the use of vehicles.

Distribution

Distribution of emergency supplies should be proportionate to the needs, and should be monitored and controlled to avoid abuse and waste. During the initial phase of the emergency, goods to be distributed should cover the immediate needs. Before engaging in distribution, the COM/Project Staff should establish a distribution plan, have a clear picture of the criteria that govern the distribution required for the selected beneficiaries, and the distribution procedures and methods supported by the initial assessments conducted.

It is the responsibility of the COM/delegate to ensure that assistance is not managed unscrupulously or for financial gains. Assistance should be delivered directly to the intended beneficiaries and distribution systems adopted to the specific conditions and population in need, as well as to IOM's capacity to handle the distribution.

SOPs for distributions of NFIs are available in the Guidance Documents and Tools for Shelter and NFI entry.

Direct Distribution

Although direct distribution allows for greater control of the process, it can also be challenging if the staff have no knowledge of the affected population and the physical environment. The following should be considered when directly distributing emergency goods/supplies:

- Project Staff should identify people who know the region and the community well, and who can provide guidance and access to the community.
- Project Staff should identify pressure groups or community leaders of the affected communities who can help in the coordination of the relief effort.
- All items distributed must be recorded through beneficiary lists to document the assistance provided.
- It is advisable to register families rather than individuals, including the special needs of the households, if any.
- Beneficiaries should be briefed on the distribution system. They can also be assigned tasks such as offloading, the carrying of supplies or organizing queues.

Indirect Distribution

In unfamiliar places, it is recommended to distribute supplies in a short period of time. In such cases, the Office affected with the crisis should find an implementing partner/non-governmental organization (IP/NGO) that know the population and can handle the distribution. The COM/Project Staff should consider:

- Identifying a reliable IP/NGO with strong contacts on the ground.
- Drawing up a service agreement defining the partners obligations including reporting. The agreement should be reviewed by the IOM Office of Legal Affairs (LEG) before implementation.
- The COM/Project Staff should closely follow up on the Partner's action to ensure that distribution follows agreed standards.
- The Partner's distribution reports should be reviewed by Project Staff/Procurement Officer with regard to the supplies distributed and the remaining stocks and to monitor distribution activities.
- All distribution records should be kept on file.

Key Considerations

- Provide transport as needed to address the emergency needs.
- The COM/Delegate should ensure that all transport vehicles are insured against material damage and should monitor all transport and distribution activities.
- Distribution activities should be closely monitored.
- Transport activities should be recorded in a centrally managed database.
- The COM/Delegate should encourage efficient use of resources.
- The COM/Delegate should identify and develop communication and networks, as well as systems of partners able to serve the most vulnerable people.

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.

For more information on Legal Agreements contact the Office of Legal Affairs: LEG@iom.int.

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