



FEMA

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## LESSON LEARNED

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### Point of Dispensing Planning: Establishing Safety Measures for Set-Up and Tear-Down Crews

#### SUMMARY

Point of dispensing (POD) managers should consider including injury prevention guidance for set-up and tear-down crews in POD plans. This will help to support staff members performing these physically demanding tasks and will inform them of appropriate safety techniques.

#### DESCRIPTION

The Bay Area Super Urban Area Security Initiative sponsored a series of 3 functional exercises (FE) in the spring of 2009: a public information officer virtual FE on March 19; a POD FE on March 19; and a receipt, storage, and staging warehouse FE on April 10. The purpose of these exercises was to test the Bay Area's public information and warning, medical supplies management and distribution, and mass prophylaxis capabilities during a public health event requiring the deployment of Strategic National Stockpile assets and the mass dispensing of antibiotic prophylaxis. The scenario for each FE was an aerosolized anthrax release that infected 35,000 individuals, which would result in an estimated 1,400 fatalities, 2,500 illnesses, and 2,500 hospitalizations in the first week. In total, 159 players from 47 state, local, and private agencies participated in the 3 FEs.

The Bay Area Super Urban Area Security Initiative (SUASI) is comprised of the cities of San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose; ten counties; more than 100 incorporated cities; and special districts, transportation agencies, and airports. The Bay Area SUASI serves 7 million people.

The POD FE took place at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum. For this module, San Francisco City and County and Alameda County established PODs in 2 ½ hours the day before the exercise and recruited and trained staff members to operate them. POD personnel simulated the dispensing of antibiotics to nearly 400 actors.

During POD setup, the San Francisco staff members expressed safety concerns for staff members asked to unload heavy items and to move heavy furniture to the far end of the designated area to make additional space available. The set-up materials provided to POD staff members did not include instructions on safe lifting techniques or guidelines on other protective measures to ensure staff safety. As a result, both the San Francisco and the Alameda PODs utilized the Coliseum crew to assist with the placement of tables and chairs in their PODs. The Coliseum staff members were experienced in moving and setting up tables and chairs and had the appropriate dollies to move the tables and chairs quickly and safely around the



**Oakland-Alameda  
County Coliseum**

PODs. Utilizing the professional Coliseum staff significantly decreased physical labor requirements for the POD set-up crews.

The AAR recommended that POD plans include and emphasize safety measures and guidance for set-up and tear-down crews. One member of the Alameda POD set-up crew recommended that PODs consider weight and size limits when purchasing supplies. Additionally, PODs could purchase supplies on wheels or in reusable wheeled containers to reduce the strength requirements for staff members involved in setup.

POD managers should consider including injury prevention guidance for set-up and tear-down crews in POD plans. This will help to support staff members performing these physically demanding tasks by informing them of appropriate safety techniques.

### **CITATION**

Bay Area Super Urban Area Security Initiative. *Bay Area Mass Prophylaxis Exercise 2009 After-Action Report/Improvement Plan*. 25 Jun 2009.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=38039>

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