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LESSON LEARNED

Mass Prophylaxis Distribution: Ensuring Clear Labeling Procedures at Receipt, Storage, and Staging Sites

SUMMARY

Receipt, store, and stage (RSS) managers should ensure that supply boxes are clearly labeled and packaged prior to delivery at points of dispensing (POD). This will allow POD personnel to locate supplies more quickly and easily.

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 an RSS 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.

Exercise participants noted that pallets and boxes of supplies were not always clearly labeled or packaged when they arrived at PODs. The staging and quality control team at the RSS warehouse processed orders for PODs and packaged the appropriate assets for shipping. When orders consisted of multiple pallets, team members simply attached an additional packing slip with information regarding the content of the pallet without indicating that multiple pallets belonged to the same shipment. This made it harder to ensure that pallets belonging to the same shipment would not be separated during transport.

Additionally, some labels on supply boxes at the San Francisco City and County POD were not visible from all angles, making it difficult for POD personnel to locate supplies. Feedback provided from the Alameda County set-up staff indicated that supplies were not always grouped according to their intended station or destination. This made it harder for POD personnel to identify and mobilize the supplies they needed.

The FE after-action report (AAR) recommended adding a field to packing slips that would allow RSS personnel to denote that a pallet is “__ of __ total pallets.” The AAR further recommended that RSS personnel color-code boxes of supplies by type of content and that they add additional labels that will be visible on all sides of the boxes. Finally, the AAR

recommended that supplies be grouped, labeled, and packaged as complete units for each intended station or destination.

RSS managers should ensure that supply boxes are clearly labeled and packaged prior to delivery at PODs. This will allow POD personnel to locate supplies more quickly and easily.

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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