



# Bay Area Point of Distribution (POD) Training and Workshop



## Executive Summary

October 31, 2014



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### OVERVIEW

The Bay Area UASI Point of Distribution Training & Workshop took place on Thursday, October 30, 2014. It was held at the Alameda County Sheriff's Office in Dublin, CA. The workshop was sponsored by the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative and conducted in partnership with FEMA Region IX and Cal OES.

Attendees included representatives from the following agencies or jurisdictions:

Alameda County	Emeryville Police Department
Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative	Federal Emergency Management Agency - Region IX
California Department of Public Health	Marin County
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services	Marin Sheriff Office of Emergency Services
California State University - Monterey Bay	Monterey County - Office of Emergency Services
City and County of San Francisco – Department of Emergency Management	Oakland Fire Department
City and County of San Francisco – Human Services Agency	San Mateo County - Office of Emergency Services
City of East Palo Alto	San Mateo Fire Department
City of Oakland	San Mateo Human Services Agency
City of San Mateo - Office of Emergency Services	Santa Clara County
City of San Ramon	Santa Clara County Fire Department
Contra Costa County - Office of Emergency Services	Solano County - Office of Emergency Services
County of Monterey	Sonoma County
East Palo Alto Police Department	Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety
	Willdan Homeland Solutions

### BACKGROUND

Points of Distribution (POD) sites are centralized locations where the public picks up life-sustaining commodities following a disaster or emergency. POD sites are needed when retail establishments are closed and the public does not have access to basic commodities. POD sites remain open until retail sites reopen or sufficient mass care operations are in place. Depending on the number of people expected at the POD site and the mechanism for distribution, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has typed several POD layout options providing for mass transit (bus), vehicular (drive-through), and/or pedestrian (walk-through) access to such life sustaining commodities. Commodities can be requested from FEMA by local and state governments in pre-packaged amounts and distributed to the public through POD operations. Commodities requests may include items such as cots, blankets, tents, tarps, baby formula, shelf stable food and bottled water.

Pre-planning POD sites is critical to ensure that a jurisdiction has the ability to receive, store and distribute supplies to the public. Local Government staff should coordinate with their state and FEMA IX logistics representatives to fully execute POD planning in their jurisdictions.<sup>1</sup>

The goal of the workshop was to educate participants about what PODs are, how they are staffed and managed, and to begin identifying potential locations within each jurisdiction. This workshop was a first

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<sup>1</sup> A Logistics Section run Point of Distribution (POD) acronym should be distinguished from a Public Health Point of Dispensing (POD) as an incident demands.

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step for many in POD planning, and for others it served to support their ongoing planning efforts.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were identified as recommended next steps that apply to all Operational Areas in the region regarding the POD planning process:

- **Conduct local POD workshops or tabletop exercises with their incorporated cities;**
- **List potential POD locations and resource requests for submittal to FEMA IX / Cal OES to inform the joint state/federal B Catastrophic Earthquake Response Plan for the Bay Area currently in development;**
- **Establish formal agreements with identified potential POD sites/facilities.**

Additional recommendations specific to site identification, site staffing, and planning are summarized as follows.

#### Site Identification:

1. Better coordinate planning efforts with a larger group to include cities and unincorporated areas, and identify plans and locations that are being considered for numerous emergency site locations within the Bay Area.
  - There is lack of available and open space within the Bay Area, resulting in an overlap of planning for the same site. Some jurisdictions have identified duplicate uses for potential POD or staging area sites across multiple plans, for example the county fairgrounds might be identified as a suitable POD location but also identified as a site for mass fatality operations, debris removal, etc.
2. Communicate to the owner of the location/facility the expected length of time the POD will be activated and unable to be used for normal operations.
  - For every site that is identified for potential POD operations, the jurisdiction should note the fact that the location/facility will be unable to have control of its normal operating areas (parking lots, buildings, etc.) until the POD is deactivated. This is especially important when the location is privately owned.
3. Establish an Incident Command structure for each POD site to communicate with the EOC.
  - The facility owners, if private, may report to the EOC Liaison Officer, and depending on the magnitude of the disaster, some of the facility's staff may be embedded in the operations structure. It is recommended that facility managers and staff receive basic Incident Command System (ICS) training so that they are knowledgeable about the organizational structure. There is no requirement for facility staff to be involved in the POD operations, but if they would prefer to, then ICS training is recommended.
4. A natural hazards threat assessment should be considered for all potential POD locations.
  - Basic natural hazard risks were discussed, such as establishing PODs away from the perimeter of buildings in case of collapse, ensuring the location is away from liquefaction zones or in areas where levees may be compromised.
5. Consider the ability to serve people with disabilities and other with access and functional when establishing a POD location.

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### Site Staffing:

1. The management, security, Public Information Officer (PIO), and Safety functions should be filled by operational area or city staff trained in ICS.
  - CERT and VOAD personnel should only be used in unskilled POD positions (Loader, etc.).
2. Pre-plan for various security functions at POD locations.
  - Participants discussed who would provide security at the POD – likely the security function will be tasked to local law enforcement (for example county sheriff or local cities) but law enforcement mutual aid should be a consideration. With an event over a large region, law enforcement resources will be scarce and consideration must be made for security of the POD from the commodity perspective (prevent water from being stolen) and from the safety perspective (public not in harm's way).
3. Identify American Red Cross updated roles and responsibilities in Bay Area POD operations.
  - It is unclear if and how the American Red Cross could support POD operations at the current time due to the restructuring of the organization. Additional follow-up needs to be considered once the Red Cross structure and mission is better defined.
4. Locate staff within the geographic area or use “out of the box” thinking when it comes to staffing POD locations.
  - It was noted that a significant amount of staff live outside of the areas they work and may not be available due to road closures.
5. Analyze local government POD operations staff needs in order to estimate and pre-plan EOC and POD staff assignments and potential state/federal resource requests.
  - Each agency needs to be aware of the staffing roles and numbers that they would be expected to fill within their jurisdiction. For example, traffic management positions identified on POD maps could be filled by county, city or by other agencies such as the National Guard. In a catastrophic incident, agencies would want their traffic controllers on the actual streets and PODs would require help in obtaining people to support traffic functions. The plans must be flexible to account for these unique variables.

### Planning:

1. Hold additional POD workshops and exercises in the Bay Area Region to continue pre-planning efforts.
  - Include a full scale or simulated POD activation as an aspect to Urban Shield's Yellow Command in coming years.
2. Assume little to no advance warning scenario when pre-planning POD operations for a catastrophic earthquake in the Bay Area.
  - For Hurricane Sandy, FEMA had time to anticipate the event and plan for it. Thus, commodities were pre-positioned prior to the storm's landfall. In the Bay Area, this will likely not be the case in the event of a catastrophic earthquake or no-notice incident. The affected jurisdiction(s) and its stakeholders must be prepared to activate and operate a POD, and obtain resources, with little-to-no advance notice.

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3. Develop a Policy Group decision matrix tool to assist in executing various levels of POD activation.
  - The matrix could include the threshold needed to open a POD to include nearby shelters, commodities needed, commercial assets open/nearby, and what utilities are currently available (water, power, etc.)
4. Establish agreements with faith-based organizations that can be an integral part of effective POD operations.
  - Additionally, they may have large amounts of volunteers, potential POD locations (including parking lots), existing traffic plans and other resources.
5. Prepare POD commodity resource requests in advance for timely submission to the state and FEMA during an incident.
  - Do so only after a clear understanding of the jurisdictions capabilities is identified. These pre-written resource requests could include: Medical Needs, Commodities, or Search and Rescue Teams.

For more information, please consult the following point of contact:

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