Distribution site organization

This section provides guidance on how to organize and conduct distributions. In situations when the host National Society has the capacity to conduct distributions on their own, relief ERUs can provide support in other distribution related activities such as training, distribution planning, linking with logistics, etc.

## Distribution options

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| **Indirect** | **Direct** - default and preferred method - | **Donation to institutions**  - only when Direct is not possible - |
| **System description** | | |
| Relief items are given in bulk directly to representatives of the community, villages or a group of head of households etc., who are then entrusted with the final distribution to individual members of their community or group. | Relief items are given directly to the beneficiary, usually to the head of household. This system allows for efficient control of the flow of relief supplies and should therefore be implemented whenever possible. | Relief items are given to institutions such as hospitals and orphanages, which will use supplies to support their normal activities. |
| **Type of situation in which these systems have been used…** | | |
| - Early days of an emergency  - No formal identification  - Large populations of affected people  - Homogeneous groups | - Settled population  - Identified population  - After initial days of emergency  - Affected population is mixed with non-affected  - Areas where there are no “community” leaders or the system has broken down | - If there are institutions still functioning that need support (i.e., orphanages, hospitals, etc.) |
| **Pros…** | | |
| - Beneficiary participation is high  - Able to get out large amount of relief items quickly  - Limited staff is necessary  - Can be implemented without identification or ration cards, etc.  - Security measures related to crowd control are limited | - Maintain control over distribution system  - Easier to target at-risk groups  Transparent  - Commodities reach beneficiaries directly  - Easier to monitor | - Simplest logistically  - Can reach populations that do not have “head of households” (i.e., orphans)  - No time spent on identification  - Simplest method |
| **Cons…** | | |
| - Lower efficiency  - Less accountability  - More vulnerable to diversion  - Perception/rumours of diversion possible, even if not there  - Most vulnerable as well as women may have difficulty with access  - Requires more monitoring mechanism | - Time consuming  - Very staff and labor intensive  - Needs trained staff and volunteers  - Needs infrastructure  - Takes responsibility for monitoring away from beneficiary  - Sometimes not possible in the immediate aftermath of a disaster | - Lower efficiency  - Requires more control and monitoring mechanisms  - Contact mainly done with institutions and not the beneficiaries  - Less accountability  - More vulnerable to diversion  - Perception/rumours of diversion possible, even if not there |

## Distribution organisation and management

Distribution with **dignity** is the guiding principle:

* Recipients are to be viewed as **survivors**, not victims, who are in a process of improving their lives with some assistance from the Red Cross Red Crescent.
* Distributions must fit within **local customs and cultural norms**. These norms are studied in the needs assessment and taken into consideration when planning and conducting relief assistance.

## 1- BEFORE the distribution

Visit the site in advance in order to review and verify:

* Administration:
  + beneficiary list + corrections
  + types and amount of relief items per individual or household
  + targeting criteria
  + list of valid identification documents
  + proxy process description + provide blank proxy letters photocopies
* Prepare distribution day:
  + location, date and time per sub-community to minimize waiting time, considering the travelling distances
  + process of distribution activity
  + who will represent the local authorities?
  + are there some community people willing to participate to the distribution activities?
* Communication to beneficiaries:
  + Info: selection criteria, distribution location, date, time, valid ID, proxy process
  + What channels?
  + Who does what and when?
* Etc.

## 2- DURING the distribution

It is very important that all of those involved in the distribution point **understand their** **roles** and what is expected from each one of them, including local authorities and beneficiary leaders.

Beneficiaries should wait outside the **distribution area** to be called to collect their supplies. When called, they should present their distribution ration card to a **verification desk** set-up at the entrance. After the cards have been checked and marked, ensure that beneficiaries sign the distribution list (a thumb print will suffice for the illiterate), if applicable. They may proceed to the distribution area, collect their cash and / or relief supplies and leave through the exit gate.

##### During distributions, a number of individual beneficiary, and non-beneficiary, queries or problems will need to be resolved. It is essential that an a specially-designated community or local authority representative, together with a member of the distribution and/or identification team, are available to address concerns regarding beneficiary selection criteria, errors in lists, misinformation, etc. To avoid disruptions and disorganization, these concerns should be addressed on an individual basis outside the distribution area (i.e. complaint table). It is preferable to review the complaints process prior to distribution to ensure consistency and efficient responses to beneficiary concerns.

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|  | * During distributions the beneficiaries should again be informed about their exact **entitlement**. * An area for inquiries, appeals & complaints should be set-up **away** from the main distribution site. * Distributions can be exhausting. Make sure the team has enough **water & food** to last the day. However, it is best not to eat & drink in front of hungry & thirsty beneficiaries. Hence, be discreet. | * Intervention should maximize **involvement** of women & men in all aspects of relief activities. * Distribution teams should **incorporate** both men & women. * Understanding as to the implications of “**head of household**” designation for women. * Distribution should **target** women to the extent possible. |

When preparing a distribution site, example of supply distribution point last page,use the following distribution site checklist to ensure you have not forgotten essential aspects of the distribution.

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| --- |
| **DISTRIBUTION SITE CHECKLIST** |
| * All persons involved in the distribution point (host National Society/International Federation/PNS, volunteers, authorities) understand their role and responsibilities * The distribution site is identified with the host National Society/PNS/International Federation emblem clearly and visibly * The distribution site is calm, secure and orderly * There is an amenity station for beneficiaries and those involved in the distribution activity. Consider the need to provide/facilitate access to water and sanitation facilities for beneficiaries at the distribution point * Weather-related needs (extreme cold/heat, sun, rain, snow, sand storm, strong winds) are taken into consideration and the necessary steps taken to address these needs * Special needs have been considered (chairs, priority given in the waiting lines, …): pregnant, elderly, mothers with babies, sick people, and prepare the distribution point accordingly * The official copy of the beneficiary list for that distribution site hangs on the walls of the distribution site and is clearly visible * All staff/volunteers wear appropriate Red Cross Red Crescent identification * The distribution area is separate from trucks and/or storage facilities preferably by distance, wall or fencing. Access to this area should be restricted only to those authorized to enter: the storekeeper, the distribution point manager, workers, security personnel, and individual beneficiaries or groups who are receiving their supplies * Relief supplies are unloaded in a secure but open visible area. Do not load into warehouse unless necessary * Think of how the team will communicate with the masses. You might need a megaphone and plenty of batteries * Only Red Cross Red Crescent staff and transiting beneficiaries are in the site * There is a marked sign-in station at the distribution site * The distribution area should have only one entrance and one exit * The different desks within the distribution area are clearly indicated with notice boards (entry, verification, …) * The complaint table is away from the distribution point * There is a separate area to receive the commodity * The encashment area must be separate * Encashment desk is a safe and closed area (classroom, car, …). The safe is not visible. The distribution can be done inside a room or through a window * Beneficiaries sign/thumb print the beneficiary list upon entry to the distribution point (or at exit after receiving the relief assistance) * The distribution scheme should be organized so that beneficiaries cannot move back through the distribution area after receiving their supplies * Security factors have been considered (site is set-up properly, enough volunteers, community leaders present, etc.) * If security personnel are necessary, they have been briefed on distribution methods and on possible problems arising during the distribution process. Their role and responsibilities are clear |

**Involving beneficiaries during distributions**

****Efficient distribution is only possible with the active participation and support of the beneficiaries themselves, including their traditional structures (leaders, chiefs, committees, etc.). The beneficiary communities can provide workers, distributors, warehouse watchmen and security personnel. Their services should normally be on a voluntary unpaid basis, as a community contribution to the assistance programme. As a general rule, storekeepers and distribution point managers should preferably be recruited from non-beneficiaries.

**Security during relief interventions**

During relief interventions, whether supply distributions or cash transfers, you may encounter situations where maintaining order during gatherings of large crowds can be difficult. In order for the intervention to run smoothly without incidents, there are a number of elements to consider.

* **Proper planning and communication** – make sure the beneficiary population understands the distribution plan and timing, and are aware of what they will be receiving. Clarity and transparency are very important to avoid false expectations.
* **Avoid disruption in the distribution** by ensuring you have enough volunteers to offload trucks and ensuring you have a buffer stock in case subsequent truckloads arrive late.
* **Involve local leaders** **and representatives** during the entire process, they will help you clarify misunderstandings and disputes.
* **Proper site selection** – sites should be spacious and selected taking security into account. Think of the beneficiaries and their needs when selecting a site.
* **Cash escort –** “…the use of armed escorts by components of the Movement is not permitted unless under exceptional circumstances and with Federation secretariat approval” – Stay Safe – The International Federation’s Guide for Security Managers, IFRC, 2011.
* **Emergency reaction** – community leaders, local National Society staff and delegates should be the first level of crowd control. Using security personnel is not encouraged but may be necessary in special circumstances. You can be made responsible for their actions. Make sure instructions to them are clear. In case of total breakdown, use the previously identified emergency exit with a vehicle and driver standing ready and knowing where to go. Make sure that you leave nobody from your team behind.

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|  | Be **on alert** and maintain high security awareness. The quicker trouble can be identified and dealt with the better. Once a crowd gets out of control it takes a lot of effort to calm the situation down. It is important to **identify** agitators or troublemakers and single them **out** and talk to them individually, away from the crowd. |

## 3- AFTER the distribution

* Clean the site before leaving: dismount fences, collect garbage, put away lent material (tables, chairs…), etc.
* Leftovers:

Do not be surprised if volunteers request or expect to receive some leftovers; they may have been affected as well. Each host National Society will have different policies on this matter; discuss the situation with the host National Society prior to making any commitments. If the host National Society agrees to allow its staff/volunteers to receive assistance, do not provide it at a distribution site where people not affiliated with the host National Society are present.

* Set in advance a buffer timing range for beneficiaries who could not reach the distribution on time. Allow them for example to come to the local chapter during the 2 weeks following the distribution to get their cash and / or NFI.
* Once this period is over :
  + NFI:

If there are a minimal amount of relief supplies left over after the distribution they can be signed for by the village leader/responsible party. Otherwise, return all leftover supplies to operation logistics/warehouse.

* + Cash:

As there is no logistic constraint, return the unclaimed cash back to the HQ bank account.

******DISTRIBUTION FLOOR PLAN**

**Legend:**

 control

 document

 material

1V 1 RC volunteer

1S 1 RC staff

1A 1 local authority

B beneficiary

**Support team:**

1V for rotating back-up

1V to supply water

& food to team

1S to coordinate +

time keeper +

move around

 1V no entry flow

 2V exit survey

 4 chairs, 2 ODK

5/ NFI POINT \*

 4V distribute, 1 per

item

 1V NFI stamp B card

 10 chairs to wait

3/ VERIFICATION \*

4/ CASH POINT \*

 1V guide in & out

 1S control data

+ collect B signature

 1S give cash & ask

B to control amount

 1V CTP stamp B card

 1 table, 4 chairs

 10 chairs to wait

**\* Multiply desks:**

Depending on the number of B,

**3/** Verification

**4/** Encashment

**5/** NFI

desks are multiplied

**Plan:**

- shadow

- toilets

- RCRC visibility

- water

- chairs, …

 1V manage lines

 2V manage crowd

1/ WAITING AREA

 1V fill in feed-back &

provide info

 1A verify & sign proxy

take care of exceptions

 1 table, 3 chairs

FEED-BACK INFO

6/ EXIT POINT

2/ ENTRY POINT

 2V guide people

 1V for orientation

& recap B valid doc

 published B lists

 water, chairs, toilets

 1S + 1A control data

 1 table, 3 chairs

 10 chairs to wait

ITEM 1

ITEM 2

ITEM 3

ITEM 4

**ENCASHMENT**

**CLOSED**

**AREA**

**SAFE**

Example