

# POD Command Staff

A Point of Dispensing (also know as a POD) is a location that the Yolo County Health Department can activate in an emergency to distribute medications to the population of Yolo County. The "Gold Standard" for this task is 200,000 people in 48 hours. For a POD to function properly; many people will need to be able to work together efficiently. This Class will introduce you to the command structure of a POD, and will answer questions that may arise during your shift at a POD.

## Lesson 1: Definitions & Identification

### Objectives

By The End Of This Class You Should Be Able To:

- Tell which staff positions are Command Staff positions
- Tell what operational areas these Staff members are responsible for
- Assume a Command Staff position in a Yolo County POD
- Handle basic staff and facility changes with ease
- Recognize when staff need assistance, breaks, or relief

Being able to address those aspects you will bring a level of consistency to any POD you may be asked to work in.

### What is Lead Staff?

Lead Staff are staff members who oversee general POD staff. Each Lead staff member supervises a team and reports to a Command Staff member. Each team fulfills a specific function at the POD.

Lead staff positions focus on facilitating one specific function at the POD. This breaks up the span of control so that Lead Staff focus on individual workers and Command Staff focus on entire teams. Some examples of team Leads that will be used at a POD would be:

- Screening Lead
- Runner Lead
- Dispensing/Vaccination Lead

Example, A Dispensing/Vaccination Lead would:

- Make sure supplies at the Vaccination stations do not run out
- Rotate staff so that staff who need breaks are sure to get them
- Present any questions/concerns which they cannot handle to a Command Staff member

## **What is Command Staff?**

Command Staff are Staff members in the POD who perform managerial functions. They supervise staff, oversee operations, and track the functionality of the POD. All Command Staff report directly to the POD Manager.

There are 6 Command Staff positions:

- Operations Unit Deputy
- Logistics Unit Deputy
- Planning Unit Deputy
- Public Information Contact
- Safety Lead
- Security Lead

Your POD may have some or all of these positions functioning. A particular position may not be necessary, or there may not be enough volunteers to staff all positions. If it is decided that your POD will function properly without a specific staff position you will not see it on any of the paperwork.

The POD will be given the command structure for the Event, in writing to refer to. Notice in the structures depicted below. In the first, every branch is being used. In the second, the Planning section has been omitted at the POD level and the staff that were under the Planning section have been re-distributed to the Logistics section.

## **What Do Command Staff Do?**

1. They manage staff at the POD
2. They manage the Operability of the POD, and try to trouble-shoot problems that come up

The POD has been structured based upon the Incident Command System (ICS). Each Command Staff member has teams under them, each team has one leader, each leader reports to the Command Staff member they are assigned to.

As a Command Staff member you will manage your team leaders. This can include making sure that staff get shift breaks, lunch breaks, and restroom breaks. You can use the schedule given to list the names of your staff and when they are scheduled to take breaks or lunches so that everyone is not on break at the same time. The POD works like any basic retail facility or hospital, in the fact that there should always be enough people on the floor to keep the POD running.

If a team leader comes to you with a question or concern (maybe they need help with a special needs client, or they are running out of forms) use your best problem solving skills to see to it that they get what they need to keep functioning. Using runners to get things is a much more efficient method than you leaving your post to go get the item.

The other portion of the POD that Command staff should be watching at all times is the Patient Flow through the POD. If you see that the pre-determined layout is not efficient enough to keep the Patient Flow moving...feel free to meet with the other Command Staff members and devise a way to rectify the bottleneck. Remember the set-up maps for the POD are starting points for you.

If something is not working change it!

This can include adding lines or changing stations to be specific to a purpose

Always document any changes to the location itself so that maps and plans can be changed for the next event at that location. This helps the Health Department provide you with the most functional plans possible.

## **Training & Identification**

- Just-in-Time Training

The Just-In-Time training is usually given on site, before opening, by the POD Manager. Pay **CLOSE** attention!! Any staff that miss the Just-In-Time training or staff that come in at shift change will need to be given their own Just-In-Time trainings by you or their leads. Some Command staff members (Safety & Security) may be asked to provide information during the Just-In-Time Training.

- Vest, ID Badge, and Radio

Your badge (as a Command Staff member) allows you into restricted areas. Keep it on and visible at all times! Your colored vest is how staff will recognize you. An emergency event is hard and fast paced. It will be difficult for people to remember names. Staff will be able to find you based on this vest color (or whomever is taking your place while you are on break). Always wear it! If you are given a radio, you will need to keep it with you so that other staff can contact you.

- Designate An Alternate!

Remember it is not your job to stop and fix all problems yourself; but to identify problems, try to find solutions and delegate available staff to help. Use your runners as your arms and legs to get more help if needed. Designate an alternate if you need to leave your position. Remember your team leads will be trying to locate you.

The Incident Command Post is an area in the POD where Command Staff can meet, exchange information, and in most cases observe the POD as a whole. It is also the place where staff will be looking when they are trying to find you. Operations and Security Command Staff walk around the POD. Logistics and Planning usually remain at the

Incident Command Post. If you must leave your station let a staff member know where you are going and take a radio with you.

## **Lesson 2: Positions with Direct Staff**

### **Difference in Positions**

There are six Command Staff positions.

Four of these directly manage staff working at the POD

- The Operations Unit Lead will be overseeing the dispensing of medications and general operations flow of the clinic.
- The Logistics Unit Lead is in charge of Physical Items and staff that provide logistical services.
- The Planning Unit Lead would be needed if the POD is expected to run more than one day.

The Security Lead is in charge of Physical Security at the POD.

The other two provide a specific function to the POD but may not manage any staff

- The Safety Lead is at the POD for the Safety of any and all staff and patients.
- The Press Assistant is likely to be a person with previous public speaking experience.

All staff members are given a brochure that describes the job they will be performing along with any forms, questions, or processes they will need to follow. As a Command Staff member you will be given a binder with one copy of everything that has been distributed to your staff. If a staff member has a question, loses their brochure, or thinks they are not capable of filling their role, this will be your main reference binder to assist them. **NEVER REMOVE ANYTHING FROM IT UNLESS PHOTOCOPYING FOR A STAFF MEMBER.**

**YOU WILL NEED TO GIVE IT TO THE PERSON WHO TAKES YOUR PLACE AT SHIFT CHANGE!!!** Keep in mind that this person will need the full binder just as much as you did when you started your shift.

### **Operations Unit Deputy**

This is usually a member who has a basic knowledge of Medical and Health services (not necessarily someone with a Medical Degree).

They can be identified by the RED vest they are wearing

- Griage – Greet those who come to the POD. Griage staff typically are given a process to separate patients into smaller lines/groups at the door. This could be line monitoring, a simple set of questions, or even a short description of the POD

process for the patients. This is the POD's front-line staff - they should be congenial, polite, assertive to the overall goal, and smile.

- Medical Screening – Ask questions to determine if there may be any harmful reactions to the medications or vaccines being dispensed. Medical Screening staff are given standard questions to ask patients with the end goal of determining which of the medications being distributed today is the correct one for them. If there is only one kind of medication or vaccine to use, their main purpose is to identify patients who may be advised NOT to take the medication or who need further medical consultation.
- Education – Distribute information regarding the drug that the patient has been cleared for by the Medical Screener. Education staff are given handouts and basic information about the medication(s). As long as the person has already been cleared for the drug the Education staff will give them information about the medication or vaccine they are going to receive.
- Dispensing/Vaccination – Distribute medication that the patient has been cleared for by the Medical Screener. Dispensing and or Vaccination staff will be looking for an indicator (sticker, signature, checkmark, etc.) that a person has been properly screened and educated about the medication and then will provide them with a bottle of pills or give them a shot.
- Pharmacy/Medical Consult – May be on site for medical consultation. If they are not on site you will be given a phone number that can be distributed for Medical Consult. Pharmacy and or Medical Consult staff are specialists who are on staff to answer questions about prescriptions or health conditions which may interact with the medication/vaccine being dispensed. If there are not enough specialists available to send to every POD location you may be given a phone number that patients can call for more information.

## **Logistics Unit Deputy**

The Logistics Unit Deputy is responsible for providing facilities, services, staff resources and material in support of the incident.

After the set up of the POD is complete the Logistics unit deputy will transition from being singly responsible for logistics activities to expanding their responsibilities for certain operational or planning activities such as supervising mental health, translators, first aid and/or paperwork collection at different phases during the operation at the POD.

Logistics is in charge of procuring food and water for staff at the clinic. In a large event this means communicating these needs to the POD Manager so they can communicate with the All POD Coordinator at the Emergency Operations Center.

They can be identified by the ORANGE vest they are wearing

- Equipment/Supplies – Keep track of all Equipment and Supplies sent to the POD and responds to requests for additional supplies. Equipment/Supplies staff should take inventory of everything that was sent to the POD by the Health Department along with anything that may be owned by the facility. After the POD is over all

non-consumable items should be inventoried at the end of the clinic in order to know what needs to be replaced. Ideally, each box of supplies will have a completed inventory list. In a large, sudden emergency, this may not happen. Each work station is responsible for inventorying all items at their station and noting all supplies used at the end of the shift.

- First Aid – Staff are on hand at every POD “Just in Case”. First Aid staff are staff who have been trained to render First Aid in an emergency. These may be Ambulance staff, volunteers from Medical Centers and Clinics, or Red Cross trained staff.
- Paperwork Collection – May hand out or collect forms from patients at the entrance and exit of the POD. Paperwork Collection staff are used if the POD is doing Medical Screening via a form. The forms will need to be distributed at the beginning of the process and collected at the end. Medical Screening forms SHOULD NEVER leave the premises. These will serve as the only records that the Health Department has in case patients should need to be contacted.
- Inventory Control– Keep track of all medication or vaccine supplies at the POD. Inventory Control staff are in charge of making sure that medications do not run out at any POD location. If the POD is running low they will let their Lead know and this information will travel up the chain of command so that the POD Manager may direct the Logistics Chief to order more medication. This person would assure medications or vaccines are maintained under the correct temperatures (ie: refrigeration or ice coolers).
- Translators – Communicators for those who speak other languages. Translators are staff who can communicate to patients in more than one language. They also will be given a telephone number and access code which can be used to translate into additional languages.
- Runners – Staff in the POD who can direct patients, break other staff, get supplies, etc. Runner staff are the arms and legs of the POD. They are used for sending messages, getting supplies, patient line control, and temporary staff for the purpose of giving another staff member a break. These staff may be assigned a staging area or roam throughout the POD. Make sure they are easily recognizable - there are orange vests provided in your POD-in-a-Box specifically for this purpose.
- Mental Health – Are on hand for mentally incapacitated, agitated, disruptive patients and stressed out staff. Mental Health are staff that have been trained to deal with patients that are mentally and/or emotionally challenged, disruptive, and/or intoxicated patients. They are also equipped to handle staff who are stressed from responding to the emergency.

## **Planning Unit Deputy**

Plans ahead for the next shift and anticipates additional needs and ways to address problems that arose during the current shift.

Planning Unit Lead would be needed if the POD is expected to run more than one day. This person ensures the completion of any documentation and staff sign-in sheets and keeps track of any and all patient and staff paperwork throughout the POD. This is the

POD's record keeping Unit. This unit also anticipates when staff and supplies are going to run out and "plans" for changing needs for the next shift/day. They do this by gathering info from the Operations and Logistics Unit Deputies.

If the event is small and at only one or two locations, the job duties of the Planning section may be assigned to Logistics and Operations sections. Whether the Planning Unit Lead is activated or not the Data Management and Sign In/Sign Out sections will be functioning.

They can be identified by the GREEN vest they are wearing

- Data Management – Organize any and all paperwork created at the POD.
- Sign In/Sign Out staff give brochures (job action sheets) to staff along with badges, vests, and forms. In a Multiple day event these staff members may be asked to give a basic orientation to new members as they sign in and then the POD Manager or Planning Section chief will give the full Just in Time Training. Sign In/Sign Out – Assure that staff sign in upon arrival and receive paperwork, badges, and vests. Also have these items returned upon the staff members' departure from the POD and sign them out.

If the event is small and at only one or two locations, the job duties of the Planning section may be assigned to Logistics and Operations sections. Whether the Planning Unit Lead is activated or not the Data Management and Sign In/Sign Out sections will be functioning.

## **Security Lead**

The Security Lead is in charge of Physical Security at the POD. In some instances this can be a uniformed officer. In a widespread emergency Police will be in short supply. If you have any prior military or law enforcement experience please let us know so that we can put your name first on the list of possible Security Leads for Yolo County.

If there is a uniformed officer available at your POD this person will most likely be the Security Lead. This person follows the sites Security plan to keep order at the POD. It is possible that private security staff may be used for the event also (depending upon availability).

They can be identified by the YELLOW vest or Law Enforcement uniform they are wearing

- Interior Security – Assure patients are not entering staff only areas. Assist POD staff in the event of theft. Escort intoxicated, agitated, or combative patients off of the premises. Interior Security is the job of every staff member (i.e. be aware of the people around you at all times) but there are some people on hand specifically for this purpose. In the absence of Police Officers; even staff wearing shirts that say security are effective deterrents when placed in front of POD exits.

- Traffic Control – Direct cars in the parking area. In the event of a drive through POD these staff members will be directing the flow of traffic through the POD. May also direct traffic to and from the main access street. Traffic Control can range anywhere from directing cars where to park to physically directing the flow of traffic down a street or in a Drive-Thru POD.

## **Lesson 3: Positions without Staff & Communications**

### **Safety Lead**

This person addresses anything that could be considered a Safety hazard. This can be something as simple as taping down a lifted up corner of a carpet so that people don't trip or working with ambulance staff to get appropriate attention for a person having a seizure.

For all injuries on site the Safety Lead has the appropriate paperwork required. They can be identified by the TAN vest they are wearing

The Safety Lead monitors all aspects of the POD which could be considered hazardous to the safety of the patients or staff. If there is broken glass they clean it up, if someone has a small injury the Safety Lead arranges for medical attention and fills out the injury log, if someone has a major injury the Safety Lead can pause all POD activity while the person is given medical attention.

The Safety Lead is also in charge of demonstrating the proper method for wearing of Personal Protective Equipment when necessary. Addressing issues such as exposure to bio-hazardous materials (i.e. during a vaccination clinic) and how to safely respond are also part of the Safety Leads' job. Any information regarding how to put on a mask etc. will be provided to the Safety Lead in their packet.

The Injury log MUST be filled out for every injury that happens on the premise. If there are specific conditions that need to be addressed at the Just-In-Time training, they also will be documented in the information given to the Safety Lead so that it can be read aloud to the rest of the POD staff during the Just-In-Time training.

### **Press Assistant**

Whether the local news shows up on scene or just a school reporter, this person is in contact with the County's or Health Department's Public Information Officer and will have a way to direct the media to appropriate source of information that has been reviewed for public release. All questions of a media nature need to be routed to this person.

They can be identified by the PURPLE vest they are wearing.



All requests for information of a Media nature should be given directly to the Health Department or County Public Information Officer, whichever is in charge of the public information for the event. However, if a member of the Media should happen to show up at the POD site the Press Assistant will have messages that are available for distribution to the Media. **THE ONLY INFORMATION TO BE USED IS THE PRE-WRITTEN MESSAGES GIVEN TO THE PRESS ASSISTANT FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT OR COUNTY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER!!!**

Be aware – the media can be persistent and demand answers to questions that representatives at the POD are not approved to answer. **ALWAYS** refer the media and reporters to the designated Public information Officer (PIO).

Specific Press Assistant training is supplied in the POD Manager class.

## **Communications**

Most communications between Command Staff members are accomplished through the usage of Radio's

Who Gets A Radio?

At a minimum, the POD manager will have a radio to communicate with the EOC/DOC, other POD locations, the Receiving, Staging and Storage Warehouse, treatment and medical facilities and/or other partner agencies. If more radios become available then they will be assigned to the command staff and then leads.

Radio Usage and Guidelines:

- To use your radio: Hold down the side button for a count of two. You must keep holding button to Transmit message. Release side button when finished.
- PLEASE LIMIT USE OF THE RADIO to essential information only.
- There will be a “word of the day” determined by security to be used in the event emergency assistance is needed. You will be given this word during your Just-In-Time training
- Be careful what you say, conversations may be monitored. Patient confidentiality should be maintained during all radio transmission.
- Plan what you are going to say. This will help limit excess use of the radio. When transmitting a message indicate: WHO you are, WHAT you need, and WHERE you are located.
- Do not use code words-plain language only. Limit the usage of discipline-specific jargon, especially when working during interdisciplinary incidents.

For example, to request help for a hurt patient:

- Incorrect message: "This is the UC Davis POD, we have a 10-37, Code 2."
- Correct message: “This is the UC Davis POD. We have a patient with life threatening injuries entering the facility.”

If you hear “BREAK”, STOP TRANSMISSIONS- emergency dispatchers are using the channel.

## **Lesson 4: Management Best Practices**

### **Leadership**

“The quality of leadership, more than any other single factor, determines the success or failure of an organization.”

Fred Fiedler & Martin Chemers

Remember to:

- Be positive, respectful, and constructive to all of the staff
- Put any differences aside for the short time you are being asked to work together
- Set a good example for all of the staff
- Take advantage of talking to Mental Health staff
- Praise in public and critique in private if at all possible

It is important to remember that, like you, everyone here is a volunteer. Be polite and helpful at all times. Arguing between staff will only add to the already stressful situation at hand.

During the first course you were advised to take the FEMA ICS 100 course to familiarize yourself with the Incident Command System. It is recommended that all potential Command Staff members complete the FEMA ICS 200 course as well.

### **Customer Service**

Treat Patients the way you would want to be treated if this were happening to you. Everyone likes to be treated nicely when buying an item or going out to dinner. The same attitude that follows good customer service in the retail world (i.e. what keeps customers coming back for more) should be used in this instance. If a patient is being treated well they will be more likely to stand in line without causing problems for staff and/or other patients.

Even though you are a volunteer the patients should still be treated like your best customers. Patients are just as scared as you may be. Ensure that you and your staff are addressing them calmly, respectfully, and professionally.

Good customer service will calm patients and make the whole POD run more smoothly.

## Handling Staff Crisis

During an emergency it is quite possible that you will need to handle a crisis involving a staff member:

- Make sure that staff showing signs of fatigue are relieved.  
When a staff member becomes tired they will start to make mistakes. A mistake (no matter how small) in any Medical capacity could equate to a huge mistake! Relieve them immediately!
- If you observe staff conflicts that can not be resolved within the constraints of the clinic setting, consider re-assigning staff to alternate jobs.  
Stressful situations can exacerbate small personality conflicts that would usually be ignored. If you see this happening in a specific section, re-assign staff. If the problem persists let the POD Manager know so that they can ask for a replacement staff member.
- If something at the POD is not functioning properly change it!  
Last but not least...if something is not functioning at the POD the way it is supposed to...change it. As a Lead or Command Staff member you have to be ready to adapt to any situation. In instances when a change is necessary it is important to confer with the rest of the Command Staff on the appropriate course of action. Remember you are a Command Staff Team, you work together to solve the problem.