Partnership for Food Protection's
Surveillance, Response and Post Response Workgroup presents

Quick Start Food Emergency Response Job Aids





Table of Contents

Execu	itive Summary	3
	ose Statement	
Scope	2	3
Benef	fits	3
Commonly Used Acronyms in Emergency Response		4
Acknowledgements		5
Job Aids		6
A.	Initial Planning in an Integrated Food Emergency Response – General	6
В.	Initial Planning in an Integrated Food Emergency Response – Epidemiology	7
С.	Initial Planning in an Integrated Food Emergency Response – Environmental/Investigation	8



Executive Summary

The Quick Start Job Aids are protocols designed primarily for food emergency response coordinators and response team members including epidemiologists, laboratory and food regulatory program officials in federal, state, local, and territorial agencies (partners agencies) who have coordinated public and environmental health authority for food emergency response. Additionally, users may also include law enforcement officials in the event of intentional contamination. The job aids can also be shared with industry, food protection task forces and other stakeholders to increase awareness about the role of government in response, and to assist them in preparing their own complimentary response protocols.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Quick Start Job Aids is to facilitate communication, coordination and planning amongst programs and agencies early on in an investigation when an adverse food event such as an outbreak or food contamination is initially suspected or detected.

Scope

The three Quick Start Job Aids provided in this guide are flow diagrams that highlight key tasks to take into consideration when gathering information and planning in the initial stages of the investigation.

- A. Initial Planning in an Integrated Food Emergency Response General
- B. Initial Planning in an Integrated Food Emergency Response Epidemiology
- C. Initial Planning in an Integrated Food Emergency Response Environmental/Investigation

The tasks in the job aids attached are based on response best practices and principles identified by the Council to Improve Foodborne Illness Outbreak Response (CIFOR), the FDA-sponsored Rapid Response Team Program (RRT), the International Association of Food Protection (IAFP), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the National Association for State Departments of Agriculture's (NASDA) Food Emergency Response Plan Template. It is suggested to include these guides in your work planning manuals and discussions.

Benefits

The Quick Start Job Aids are meant to promote inter and intra-agency communication and collaboration, using simple visuals to remind and reinforce tasks that should be considered in initial stage of response activities in order to enhance rapid exchange of information.



Commonly Used Acronyms in Emergency Response

AAR - After Action Review or Report

CD – Communicable Disease

CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CIFOR – Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response

CORE (Network) - Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation Network (FDA)

DHS - Department of Homeland Security

EH - Environmental Health

EHS-Net - Environmental Health Specialists Network

EOP - Emergency Operations Plan

EPA - Environmental Protection Agency

FDA - Food and Drug Administration

FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency

FERP - Food Emergency Response Plan

FoodCORE - Foodborne Disease Centers for Outbreak Response Enhancement (CDC)

FPTF - Food Protection Task Force

FSIS - Food Safety Inspection Service (USDA)

FRMAC - Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center

HAN - Health Alert Network

HHS - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

IAP - Incident Action Plan

ICS - Incident Command System

LHD - Local Health Department

MFRPS - Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards

MOA - Memorandum of Agreement

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

NIMS – National Incident Management Plan

NRF – National Response Framework

NVEAIS – National Voluntary Environmental Assessment Information System

OP – FDA Office of Partnerships (formerly Division of Federal State Relations – DFSR)

PFGE - Pulsed-Field Gel Electrophoresis

POS - Point of Service

PPE - Personal Protection Equipment

QMS - Quality Management System

RFR - Reportable Food Registry

RRT - Rapid Response Team

SOP - Standard Operating Procedure

USDA - US Department of Agriculture

WWOA – Working With Other Agencies (RRT Manual Chapter)

* A full glossary of terms is available in the Rapid Response Team Best Practices Manual



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Job Aids

A. Initial Planning in an Integrated Food Emergency Response - General

Planning and Preparedness Prior to Response Food Emergency Event Triggers CIFOR Guidelines Foodborne illness outbreak RRT Best Practices Manual Food contamination Written procedures, MOUs Intentional contamination, food threats Food Emergency Response Plan Natural disasters Trained response personnel Critical infrastructure impacting power, water supply etc. Response system self-assessment and continuous improvement process Laboratory accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 or has quality system that meets regulatory program standards. Summarize incident event Notify appropriate Identify other key response Facilitate emergency group personnel within your team agencies and members meeting / conference call data currently available from each stakeholder and agency of emergency using emergency response · Access secure conference meeting/conference call protocols and contact list call line data gaps Epidemiology · Law enforcement, if · Issue invitation with Epidemiological · Environmental (food intentional, threats agenda information Environmental/food regulatory officials) · Local, department · Ensure all participants · Laboratory (food, operations center, state have proper clearance if information environmental, clinical) Laboratory information emergency operation required Other - Food emergency center · Identify call facilitator and Law enforcement · Other stakeholder response protocols information leads for epidemiology, · Public affairs press officer agencies - local, state, environmental, laboratory, · Current media coverage county, CDC, FDA, USDA law enforcement agency FSIS, DHS representatives on call Epidemiology (see Epidemiology Flow) Summarize known information on ill persons Develop Response Action Plan or Incident Action Plan Summarize known information on etiology · Gathering of additional data · Hypothesis generating interviews · Determine potential hypothesis if there are illnesses · Establish case definition & active case finding · Identify response team members, subject matter experts Conduct epidemiologic study with appropriate control group · Identify additional resources, equipment · Refine hypothesis via study results · Identify leadership and coordination · Ensure collection of clinical specimens · Enforcement/prevention coordination · Communication & patient education Schedule briefing if necessary Environmental/Investigation(s) (See Environmental Flow) Food/complaint information · Facility information · Authority/regulations/industry guidance Review communication protocols · Food hazards and risks · Environmental assessment, sampling, mitigation Coordination of media and press events and releases · Recalls and tracebacks, traceforwards Industry, consumers, public records requests · Industry communication mechanisms, issues, concerns · Senior officials · Resources available and assistance needed Media contacts · Inter-agency collaboration and coordination · Action plans and situation reports Scheduling of future conference calls · Expansion of response team(s) if necessary Information sharing protocols . Documentation to facilitate after action and final report Laboratory · Assess capability & capacity to effectively test for suspected substance or agent Order additional materials not on-hand Conduct appropriate tests for target analyte(s) · Perform molecular fingerprinting (PFGE) on organisms under PulseNet surveillance · Review data/quality control and report results



B. Initial Planning in an Integrated Food Emergency Response - Epidemiology

Summarize known information on ill persons

- · # III persons, # Hospitalized; # Deaths
- · Case demographics & distribution
- Spectrum of symptoms
- · Duration of illness
- · Clinical lab results, if available
- Food exposure history
- · Illness onset dates (construct epidemiologic curve)

Summarize known information on source of illness

- · Suspected common exposure(s) among cases, if known
- · Suspected mode(s) of transmission, if known
- · Determine if outbreak appears to be ongoing (refer to epidemiologic curve)
- Case clusters

Establish response authority/roles

- · Notify investigative team per internal policies
- · Multi-jurisdictional authorities, coordination
- · Multi-disciplinary notifications (Environmental, Laboratory, etc)
- · Imminent health hazard response capability
- · Criminal investigation chain of custody
- · Incident Command Structure, if to be activated

Identify potential source(s) of illness & mode(s) of transmission

- · Hypothesis generating interviews
- Develop case definition
- · Additional case finding
- Refine hypothesis as data collected
- · Identification of appropriate control group for epidemiologic study
- · Implement control measures as appropriate
- Pursue appropriate public education
- · Prepare to communicate findings

Prepare to discuss epidemiologic findings and plans

- Investigation objectives and priorities
- Regular summaries of known information to date with expanded investigative team
- Control/mitigation strategies
- Investigation reports/summaries and sharing of documentation
- Identify method of information sharing with multidisciplinary investigation team (i.e. status meetings; email; etc)

Prepare to discuss communication plans

- Risk communication protocols and issues
- Inter-agency communication and collaboration, news releases
- Collaboration on communication with stakeholders (industry; medical; personnel; etc)
- Political and media misinformation

Assess resources and request assistance if necessary

- Equipment available (PPE, clinical sampling
- Laboratory services and support
- Continuity of core operations
- Communication/IT resources
- Funding for overtime, surge capacity resources
- Subject matter experts, funding and other assistance available

Field investigation and support team on standby materials, forms, etc)



C. Initial Planning in an Integrated Food Emergency Response – Environmental/Investigation

Obtain suspect food vehicle(s) information

- Food name, description, source
- · Preparation
- Packaging, pictures of product/cases
- · Labeling, lot no. codes, dates
- Storage conditions
- Distribution and transportation
- · Method of service

Describe suspect food facility operation(s)

- Address, hours, employees, size, type
- Processing operations, water supply
- Facility vulnerabilities
- Photos, plans or GIS maps if available and useful
- Product rotation/turn-around timeframe for product of interest

Establish response authority/roles

- · Facility licensed and/or inspected
- · Lead food regulatory agency
- Multi-jurisdictional authorities, coordination
- · Food regulatory standards applicable
- Imminent health hazard response capability
- · Criminal investigation chain of custody
- Incident Command Structure if to be activated

Identify potential hazards and risk communication issues High risk foods and processes Volume of food processed distrib

- Volume of food processed, distributed daily
- Employees (sick, terminated, new, lack of sick food worker policy)
- Contaminants
- Contamination, survival and proliferation of pathogens
- · Potential lack of preventive controls
- Critical infrastructure affected
- New ownership, change in management/ operations
- Change in processes, suppliers
- · Co-mingling of product
- Compliance history, complaints, RFRs
- Pending complaints, enforcement actions
- · Conflicts of interest

Prepare to discuss environmental investigation plans

- Environmental assessment and sampling objectives and priorities
- Tracebacks, traceforwards
- Control/mitigation strategies, enforcement actions, recalls
- Field investigation activation and planning, collaboration
- Investigation reports/summaries and sharing of documentation

- Communication/IT resources
- Funding for overtime, surge capacity resources
- Federal personnel, subject matter experts, funding and other assistance

