The purpose of forming a community-level committee at every food distribution point is to help the distribution event run smoothly. These committees (often called **Food Distribution Committees or FDCs**) can communicate to recipients the site and date of a commodity distribution, organize offloading and stacking of commodities, keep order at the site, and complete other tasks as required. In some cases, with significant training and supervision, FDCs may conduct a distribution.

**Selection of Committee Members**

Targeted food recipients can nominate potential members during recipient verification exercises. Following community consultation and endorsement by any Village Development Committee (as applicable), members can be selected in a public meeting, through secret ballots, or through raising hands as appropriate. Suggested minimum requirements to serve as a member are as follows.

* Registered commodity recipient, or members of recipient households covered by the distribution point. (Members should end their involvement with the committee when they graduate from the food program.)
* 18 years or over (preferable)
* Able to count
* Respected in the community
* NOT currently a political or local leader
* Secretary must be literate
* Strive for equal participation of men and women

**Possible Roles and Responsibilities of Committee**

* Assist Awardee with validation of recipients
* Notify recipients of distribution dates, and the need (if any) to bring containers
* Identify storage facilities for commodities prior to distribution
* Provide security to safeguard commodities and other FDP materials (including banners and ration boards) while in custody
* Arrange labor/volunteers to off-load commodities from trucks (or other transport)
* Tally commodity as it is off-loaded, and reconcile and sign receipt waybills
* Arrange commodity scoopers before distribution
* Arrange commodity and site facilities
* Check scoops for accuracy
* Sensitize community on donor, entitlement, and food usage
* Verify recipient eligibility, and mark ration cards
* Participate in scooping work with the scoopers as needed to smoothly run the distribution
* Verify receipt of commodity ration
* Help answer questions and address concerns of recipients waiting to receive their ration
* Keep order at the distribution site
* Transfer excess commodity and empty containers per standard procedures
* Clean site after distribution

**Preventing Misuse[[1]](#footnote-1)**

A committee member may be tempted to divert commodities towards their families, friends, ethnic or regional group, or those able to pay (financially or sexually). To reduce this risk:

* Require that all committee decisions are transparently publicized and that people know their entitlements so they can speak out if they feel a committee isn’t fairly representing them.
* Make random, surprise visits to observe committees or volunteers in action, and set up an independent complaints mechanism (i.e., not through the committee or volunteer structure).
* Encourage committee members to immediately report any deviations of commodity stocks or inappropriate behavior of distribution staff.
* Ensure women and minorities have a say in decision making. Ensure that meetings are effectively chaired, so no one party or person dominates, and that decisions reflect the views and needs of all.
* Publicly state that committee members should not be paid, including by recipients. Make sure everyone understands and agrees to this.
* Provide specific training for committee members in their roles and responsibilities, including what is not acceptable behavior, and how to report suspected misuse. Clarify that if they allow unacceptable behavior, the community will lose resources and the program may even be terminated.
1. Adapted from: Biased local relief committees (pp. 127-128) in *Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations; Handbook of Good Practices*, Roslyn Hees, Marie-Luise Ahlendorf, and Stephanie Debere, Transparency International. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)