Commodity Management

Warehouse Manager

A warehouse manager ensures smooth operation of the warehouse and is responsible for the overall management and accountability of receipts, storage, dispatches, returns, documentation, accounting, and reporting of food commodities in the warehouse(s) in accordance with the donor's guidelines and the implementing organization's practices and standards. The warehouse manager should closely identify and monitor training needs and conduct on-the-job training on efficient management of warehouses and on commodities for staff under his/her supervision.

The warehouse manager's core competency areas include:

1. Planning and accountability
2. Warehouse management
3. Documentation and reporting
4. Inventory and control
5. Supervision and administration

1. Planning and Accountability

1.1 Assess and plan for storage facilities (primary, secondary, and final distribution point levels warehouse) to ensure compliance with donor and programs/organization's requirements before those are selected. Assessment includes, but is not limited to, warehouse security, cleanliness, and related issues, such as suitability, that may affect care and quality of the commodities stored there.

1.2 Secure basic warehouse equipment, supplies, and records prior to food arrival (e.g., pallets, fire extinguishers, first aid kit, weighing scale, reconstitution materials, stock ledgers, stack cards).

1.3 Coordinate with all stakeholders to ensure timely dispatch of commodities according to the distribution plans.

1.4 Know required record keeping for all commodity transactions.

2. Warehouse Management

2.1 Know warehouse procedures, including stacking, receiving, dispatching, record keeping, and labor handling.

2.2 Understand the benefits of the layout plans for storing different types of commodities, which account for the shelf-life/ best-if-used-by date (BUBD) and consumption rate of each commodity, as well as access to the loading docks.

2.3 Maintain the highest measures of cleanliness of the warehouse and commodities through scheduled plans.

2.4 Know the processes involved in commodity receipt, storage, and dispatch and in ensuring optimal space utilization at the warehouse, first in first out (FIFO), and need for reconstituted stock to be dispatched on priority.

2.5 Understand the need to regularly monitor stock quality and to segregate damaged commodities, reconstitute, document, and report.

2.6 Practice integrated pest management and preventive and corrective procedures, including spraying and fumigation requirements according to donor regulations. Be familiar with Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) procedures.

3. Documentation and Reporting

3.1 Be familiar with the need to document the type, quantity, and condition of commodities received at the warehouse and final distribution points; to ensure that the receiving personnel append their signatures on the waybills accompanying the commodities; and to report back to the commodity manager and commodity tracking system officer.

3.2 Prepare and submit weekly and monthly commodity reports summarizing all transactions, situations, and constraints faced during the reporting period for management actions.

3.3 Formulate report submission schedules for the warehouse officer and ensure that it is followed. Verify the accuracy of all warehouse reports before submission.

3.4 Establish a commodity dispatching mechanism, such as ensuring approved commodity release notes have been received before dispatching commodities from the warehouse.

3.5 Be well versed in the preparation and documentation of claims against liable persons responsible for commodity loss or damage between warehouses and the final distribution points as per the donor guidelines and criteria. Submit reports to the commodity manager and program team to forward to leadership and the donor.

4. Inventory and Control

4.1 Be well conversant in the Generally Accepted Commodity Accountability Principles (GACAP).

4.2 Prepare loss or damage reports to be submitted to the appropriate authorities for follow-up action.

4.3 Ensure that commodity records are neat, up to date, and readily available at any time they are needed for review by the commodity manager, commodity tracking system, or key program staff.

4.4 Understand the need for the warehouse premises to be secure and for an access control mechanism, such as keeping custody of one set of warehouse keys and introducing the warehouse open and close register or visitor register to minimize chances of fraud and/or theft.

4.5 Carry out periodic physical inventories and review of warehouse records. Conduct warehouse spot checks on off-hours/weekends/holidays to ensure that there are no discrepancies between physical stocks and book balance (stack card/ledger balance).

5. Supervision and Administration

5.1 Supervise all warehouse staff and the safety of the food commodities in the assigned area of jurisdiction.

5.2 Identify training needs and implement those to the extent permitted by the budget.

5.3 Set performance standards for the staff working in the warehouse.

5.4 Ensure overall commodity safety in the warehouse (e.g., checking for roof leaks, drainage, compound fence, fire-fighting and other pertinent equipment, gates, padlocks, lighting).

The Core Competency Series was developed by staff from The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program with significant contributions from the various task forces of the Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Network. The series intends to provide hiring managers, program managers, and program staff with explanations of the basic skills and knowledge senior technical staff may possess to carry out their positions effectively. Official job titles, functions, and requirements may vary based on organization and program.

5. Supervision and Administration (continued)

5.5 Coordinate transport requirements with the logistics department in advance for trucks required for loading and dispatching of commodities to the planned final distribution points.

5.6 Check all commodities at the warehouse to determine need for fumigation and/or spraying. This includes checking for the presence of birds, rodents, and other pests in the warehouse and taking appropriate action.

5.7 Coordinate with the transport company, fumigation company, nongovernmental organization, and other service providers.

5.8 Establish safety and security procedures for warehouse and staff. Lead or participate in the Warehouse Safety Committee. Relay changes in safety standards to warehouse staff and ensure training is accomplished to meet those standards.