

Physical Security for COVID-19 Vaccine Points of Distribution

Planning for increased security during vaccine distribution



As the U.S. expands access to the COVID-19 vaccine, points of distribution (PODs) will play a critical role. To maximize distribution efforts, PODs will likely operate in publicly accessible areas, including pharmacies, community centers, stadiums, convention centers, and parking lots. Although there are currently no credible or imminent threats, it is critical that POD operators consider increasing security to reduce potential risks posed by anti-vaccination protesters, insiders, criminals, terrorists, or malicious cyber actors. Working closely with local law enforcement or Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Protective Security Advisors (PSAs) to better understand potential vulnerabilities and implementing basic security measures can significantly reduce risk. **In the event of any emergency, call 9-1-1 immediately.**

PRE-PLANNING PROTECTIVE MEASURES



Develop a Comprehensive Security Plan

ESTABLISH OR DESIGNATE

- ... a threat management team.
- ... an Emergency Response Plan (ERP).
- ... linkage with local law enforcement.
- ... a post-incident rally point.
- ... a site security manager.

MONITOR

- ... nearby demonstrations that could involve unlawful acts.

PLAN

- ... for lights, security, tow trucks with fuel, closed-circuit television (CCTV), generators, and other safety requirements.



Prepare Physical Perimeter Security

ALLOW

- ... only authorized vehicles in loading zones.
- ... packages only from trusted sources.

EMPLACE

- ... physical barriers between streets and PODs to protect pedestrians.
- ... operable CCTV cameras.
- ... scalable queuing systems to accommodate car volume.

SECURE

- ... proximate sidewalks and streets.



Enforce Crowd Control Measures

SET EXPECTATIONS

- ... about wait times and the number of vaccines available per day.
- ... about lanes and queue routes, speed, and one-way directions.

CONSTRUCT TEMPORARY INFRASTRUCTURE

- ... to control traffic flow, using items like jersey barriers and traffic cones.
- ... for serpentine pathways cars will use.

EMPLOY

- ... numerous trained traffic directors, wearing safety vests.



Maintain Physical Security within POD

CLEARLY MARK

- ... restricted areas to avoid pedestrian confusion.

BLOCK ACCESS

- ... to sensitive areas; allow only credentialed individuals to enter.

CHECK

- ... employee access credentials.

PRE-POSITION

- ... first responder kits.

SECURE AND MONITOR

- ... all exits.

MITIGATION OPTIONS FOR SPECIFIC THREATS



ACTIVE SHOOTER

- Employ sufficient security personnel to protect and observe all key areas.
- Instruct security personnel to scan high-angle perches frequently, especially in urban areas.



VEHICULAR ASSAULT

- Pre-engage with municipal authorities and law enforcement to close nearby streets except POD ingress.
- Install vehicle barriers to shield pedestrians from traffic.



IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES (IED) & IMPROVISED INCENDIARY DEVICES (IID)

- Limit the number or remove trash bins onsite.
- Conduct periodic visual security sweeps of the POD grounds to ensure suspicious items are found quickly.



INSIDER THREAT

- Implement a clear, simple-to-use reporting mechanism.
- Conduct thorough pre- and post-employment screening of all workers.



THEFT

- Maintain strict access controls for locked vaccine storage areas and vaccine dispensing processes.
- Transport vaccine pallets, even from freezer to POD, with attached armed guard.
- Ensure high-value vaccine containers remain secure after use amid threat of theft.



SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (sUAS)

- Contact the Federal Aviation Administration to establish sUAS restriction, if possible.
- Observe, maintain line of sight, and report unknown sUAS.

GENERAL MITIGATION ADVISORY

- **Create and exercise a functional needs-inclusive ERP.**
- **Train employees on identifying and reporting** suspicious behavior and items, essential workplace conduct and cyber hygiene, and the [Run, Hide, Fight](#) protocol.
- **Contact** your [Statewide Interoperability Coordinator \(SWIC\)](#) to gain current information to facilitate emergency communications logistics, including information technology and management, as well as support for network requirements.
- **Visit** cisa.gov/safecom/planning to gain awareness of communications and interoperability resources.
- **Visit** cisa.gov/coronavirus to learn how to mitigate cyber vulnerabilities across the vaccine distribution process.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



CISA's [Hometown Security](#) program provides access to tools and resources to support community security and resilience; the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recognizes that communities are the first line of defense in keeping the public safe and secure. Visit the Hometown Security website for resources that will help you identify and mitigate potential threats to your operation.

Further resources from DHS include:

[“If You See Something, Say Something®”](#) campaign

[Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative](#)

Federal Emergency Management Agency's [Emergency Response Plan](#)

To reach your local PSA, contact [CISA Central](#)