

# Mid-Atlantic Private-Public Sector Coordination

## Supply Chain Resilience Workshop #3 Summary of Conclusions

The Mid-Atlantic regional private-public sector coordination effort continued on Tuesday, July 16, 2024, with the third and final workshop between representatives from grocery, transportation, and emergency management industries at the local, state, and federal levels, in Philadelphia, PA. The purpose of this workshop was to continue discussions from Workshops #1 and #2 while integrating federal partners. This workshop also served as a final project-specific discussion, beginning the transition from the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program-funded project to a steady-state endeavor through the establishment of the Mid-Atlantic Food Supply Chain Working Group.

### Workshop #3 Themes:

- Waivers
- Information Sharing
- Resource Limitations
- Restoration of the Supply Chain



### Waivers

- Both the private and public sectors discussed the importance of waivers, as well as the activation process.
- The public sector explained the differences in their respective state's policies around waiver activities demonstrating the difficulty in activating specific waivers.
- The private sector shared that waivers enacted *before* an emergency are much more impactful on their ability to stock, restock, and resume operations after an incident.
- The private sector also frequently has difficulty moving food regionally when states that neighbor the impacted state typically do not have equivalent waivers in place. Multi-state waivers are very effective in maintaining supply chain flow.
- **Action Item:** The Mid-Atlantic Supply Chain Working Group (Working Group) will work to document the process for activating relevant waivers in each of the Mid-Atlantic jurisdictions.
- **Action Item:** The Working Group will document essential elements of information (EELs) that can facilitate critical information sharing to improve input and communication around waivers.



### Information Sharing

The private sector explained that immediately following an incident they need to know...

- What happened and how bad is it?
- What is the geographic footprint?
- How long is it expected to be bad?
- What can we (private sector) do?

The private sector understands that the area of direct impact will be focused on life safety. The grocers are interested in looking at bordering locations in order to restore community access to food on the periphery.

- The private sector requested that, when possible, information be shared in writing and at regular time intervals.
- The group discussed platform requirements for effective information sharing. Currently email is sufficient, and the group agreed they would prefer spend time finding the right platform rather than quickly implement an ineffective tool.
- The future platform for information sharing must allow for real-time communication, file sharing, and be accessible to all critical public and private sector partners, while maintaining a manageable size of the group.
- Government partners highlighted that their role is to use private sector EELs to advocate for the private sector in order to restore community access to food.
- The National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC) does not function as an information sharing platform.
- **Action Item:** Public Sector partners plan to conduct a platform review to determine what platforms exist that can support this type of information exchange. Possible options discussed included MS Teams, AdobeConnect, SharePoint, and HSN.



## Resource Limitations

- Both private and public sector partners discussed the ongoing challenges in obtaining resources. The public sector highlighted that they can input resource requests on behalf of the private sector.
  - The District can submit a formal resource request either through the Critical Infrastructure Program Manager or the Business Emergency Management Operations Center (BEMOC).
  - The private sector can also request fuel support through their states, then FEMA can advise on prioritization.
- Points of Distribution (POD) sites are typically resource intensive.
  - Though PODs do not have the capacity to replace grocery even for a few days, there is often a need to activate sites to support vulnerable populations and due to with political and community pressure following a disaster.
  - The private sector highlighted that strategically distribute generators based on power restoration information in order to decrease the number of PODs where possible.

**Action Item:** Mass care plans and other emergency plans do not reflect a clear understanding of private sector capacity and supply chain restoration. The public sector acknowledged the need to adjust plan language to emphasize stabilizing lifelines through supply chain restoration.

The private sector noted that grocery stores can provide resources to the public sector without an emergency declaration. One grocer highlighted that their stores can operate at a limited capacity without power, and in past disasters they have opened the deli for first responder meal distribution.

- Action Item:** As the private-public sector partnership continues, the public sector expressed interest in leveraging private sector resources highlighted throughout this effort.

## → Restoration of the Supply Chain

- The private sector articulated that they need the public sector to support them in reestablishing the normal flow of groceries following a disaster. This allows the public sector to then focus resources and response on supporting those who still cannot access food, rather than the entire community.
- Mass Care representatives emphasized that they want to ensure they are deploying resources in a way that maximizes community support while ensuring the supply chain is not impacted, which requires...
  - ...understanding resource and contract overlap in order to avoid unnecessary competition.
  - ...understanding the operating status of stores.
- One challenge identified that slows the restoration of the supply chain is the lack of prioritization in re-entry to a disaster site.
  - Currently, re-entry is typically managed in a first in, first out process, rather than prioritizing critical commodities and services.
  - If priority were given to businesses ahead of the general public, then the community's access to grocery stores could likely be expedited.
- Throughout the workshop series the public sector struggled to identify a singular place within the emergency management structure to integrate the private sector. Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8 Mass Care, ESF #11 Agriculture and Natural Resources, ESF #14 Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure, and BEMOC were among the existing entities discussed.
- Action Item:** The public sector will continue to engage with the grocers and other private sector partners during both steady-state and emergencies. As engagement continues, the appropriate emergency management structure will become clear or adapt to meet all participants needs and goals.

DC HSEMA and MWCOG would like to sincerely thank the private sector grocery partners who have remained engaged and open partners throughout this initiative, as well as the Cities of Baltimore and Philadelphia OEM, PEMA, MDEM, and FEMA Region 3 for their ongoing support and participation.

