Staffing

Under the supervision of a warehouse manager, CRS CP warehouses are generally staffed with a warehouse assistant, security agents (contracted or domestic), a handful of permanent laborers who are at times assigned supervisory duties in various areas such as unloading, stacking, rebagging, etc. It is also the responsibility of the warehouse manager to coordinate with the security manager to ensure that warehouse staff and any other CRS staff with access to the warehouse is adequately trained in warehouse safety and security and made aware of potential hazards at any warehouse PRIOR to starting implementation of warehouse activities.

Prior to receiving food assistance commodities, CRS managers will have taken steps to ensure that appropriate actions will have been taken to minimize incidents, accidents, and other hardships to CRS' staff and goods stored at the warehouse.

I. Warehouse Safety and Security

1. Housekeeping Guidelines

Food aid programs often take place in economically and physically difficult environments, including conflict zones and sites of man-made and natural disasters. Often, they are areas with extreme heat or high humidity. Food aid commodities are a valuable resource for vulnerable people in these situations. Care must be taken so that the commodities remain healthy and secure. Prevention of incidents and accidents begins with good housekeeping. Good housekeeping leads to a safe warehouse environment. To keep a warehouse safe requires awareness, anticipation and common sense. The warehouse manager should ensure:

Safety:

- Maintenance of clutter-free environment: walking areas inside the warehouse and its surroundings are free of boxes, materials, electric cords, tools, and equipment against which people may stumble and fall
- Removal of garbage, debris, dirt, and oily materials that are a potential fire hazard. There should be enough trash cans inside and outside the warehouse for easy disposal of such items.
- Daily emptying of trash cans in covered outside bins
- To the extent possible, the warehouse is kept free of rodents and other pests to protect warehouse workers and stored commodities
- Prohibition of smoking in the warehouse; **post no-smoking signs**
- A clean washroom available to all staff and workers should be required to wash their hands before handling commodities, particularly if they are engaged in re-bagging activities

Security:

- The warehouse is provided with a first aid kit and that assigned employees have a basic knowledge of how to use it
- The warehouse is equipped with fire extinguisher(s) (see more below)
- The warehouse is regularly visited by a safety inspector who provides a written report and that the inspector's recommendations are promptly addressed
- To the extent possible, each warehouse has multiple exits and that visible exit signs are posted in the warehouse in order for staff to recognize where they can exit in case of emergency
- Emergency phone numbers are posted and visible to all warehouse staff

2. Safety: Specific Recommendations

Several areas of warehouse safety to discuss with all warehouse employees include:

- a. Loading/off-loading area (equivalent to a docking area). Whether outside the warehouse or on the warehouse terrace/arcade, this is where all goods are delivered to or shipped. The warehouse floors must be carefully cleaned before and after each loading and unloading activity. When trucking operations are conducted inside the warehouse, the warehouse manager should ensure that the areas in contact with the trucks' tires are immediately and thoroughly cleaned with disinfectants at the end of the day when delivery operations are over.
- b. *Forklift*: Although very few CRS warehouses are equipped with forklifts, it is important to remember that only certified forklift operators should be allowed to use them. (For more on forklifts, **see Section C/Phase 8).** Scheduled maintenance and quick repairs of forklifts prevent fluid spills (fuel, oil, coolant, etc.) from contaminating the warehouse floor and stored goods.
- c. *Stacks*: If commodities are improperly stacked, they may endanger warehouse staff. It is recommended that when removing bags from the stacks workers start from the top row first. When stacking materials, height limitations should be observed as much as possible depending on warehouse size and commodity quantities. Stacking of bagged commodities should not be more than 25 to 30 layers high and not more than 16 layers high for cartons of vegetable oil. (The stacking recommendations are imprinted on the boxes).
- d. *Falls, helmets, or hard hats:* Falling objects can injure staff. To mitigate effects of falling objects, it is recommended that employees be provided with hard hats and required to wear them during warehouse operations. Injuries to workers due to falling or slipping can be prevented if warehouse staff follows the housekeeping guidelines prescribed above.
- e. *Ladders:* CRS warehouses must have ladders. Fiberglass ladders are stronger than metal (which are aluminum) and are therefore recommended. All ladders need to be inspected on a weekly basis and after they have been damaged. Metal ladders are susceptible to the same wear as fiberglass. All types of ladders, whether wooden, metal, or fiberglass, should be checked frequently for possible defects resulting from extended wear and necessary repairs and/or replacements must be made.
- f. *Evacuation plan and fire extinguishers*: The CP Security Manager will make sure that all program staff with access to the warehouse should be familiar with the warehouse section of the CP Safety and Security plan. All food program staffs with access to the warehouse must know the location of the fire extinguisher(s). The CRS security manager will ensure that warehouse personnel have read the warehouse evacuation plan and are trained in fire safety.
- g. Lighting and security The CRS logistics manager must ensure that adequate lighting is provided in the warehouse and in the outside areas adjacent to the warehouse. Warehouse guards and/or other security measures must be used to protect the staff and the warehouse contents, particularly in insecure areas.

3. Security: Specific Recommendations

When tons of food commodities are stored at a warehouse in a food-insecure environment, some people will want their "share" of the food. They will steal if given the opportunity. Security at warehouses involves, among other things, prevention of internal and external theft.

a. Internal:

- i. The security and warehouse managers will assess areas of the warehouse more vulnerable for theft (for example unloading and loading areas) and will devise measures to prevent them such as hiring or contracting Security Guards and including adequate responsibilities in their contracts.
- ii. Security employees can be either CP staff or outsourced from a security agency.
- iii. All security and warehouse staff must be trained in internal security. Training and education of employees and management must be mandatory. Training should be continued and updated throughout employment (more than just one or two days). Everyone with cause to work in the warehouse (from drivers and laborers to managers and food accountants) should be trained in safety and security. The warehouse and security managers should integrate safety training into regular operational procedures to ensure that handling and stacking, use of fire extinguishers, and CRS evacuation plans are part of the employee's regular training program:
 - a. The logistics manager will ensure that all new warehouse employees, including day laborers, receive training on warehouse safety before they can begin working in the warehouse
 - b. The logistics manager will identify firefighters and fire experts and communicate their information to warehouse staff and other relevant office staff
 - c. Copies of the safety measures described in this guide should be posted in the warehouse. All warehouse employees should be informed of the requirements and obliged to comply with them.
 - d. Warehouse employees should be encouraged to voice safety and security concerns to CRS' management and to make recommendations for improvements
- iv. Security of goods in a warehouse should also include tools, materials and equipments in addition to the food. The Warehouse Manager will maintain an inventory of ALL tools, materials and equipments at the warehouse and entrust responsibility for their security to a designated warehouse staff
- v. In addition to iv. above, computers, files and records must also be addressed in a warehouse security plan. Accidents, indiscretion and possible falsification may happen when reports and records are left open and exposed to non-authorized personnel. As much as possible, CRS authorities should provide a protected space with keys and locks to the Warehouse Manager for protection of the warehouse records. This space or office will be constructed to allow for continued oversight of the warehouse by the Manager through resistant "glass walls" at all times even when there is no significant activity happening at the warehouse.