

Emergency Management of Supply Chains

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Mitigating disasters requires a reliable supply chain. In late 2021, major flooding in British Columbia led to the risk of interprovincial food shortages and highlighted areas needing improvement in emergency mitigation and logistics (Sahinyazan & Duran, 2021; Dion, 2021). In order to prevent future problems if major transportation routes are damaged, resources and supply chains should be secured by creating strategically located backups and supply depots. These backups may involve utilising existing partnerships such as those with the Red Cross or others in order to spread out the housing of emergency and early response supplies. Partnerships with organisations developed by emergency planners will be imperative in order to assure accessibility in case of damaged routes. Due to the costs associated with storage and maintenance of depots, priority should be given to basic humanitarian supplies.

Ratick, et al. (2008) assert supply chain vulnerabilities need to be assessed and acted upon before incidents occur. Nationally, emergency planners may benefit from interprovincial collaboration and consultation with supply chain professionals to identify local and national areas of concern. Further, emergency planners may decide to develop plans outlining alternative supply locations or methods of transportation to take in case of a closure. Hale & Moberg (2005) suggest using a scientific approach for identifying locations for the storage of various emergency supplies. This way, critical life-saving disaster supplies can be deployed from multiple areas to an emergency site without relying on singular routes. The costs associated with these supplies should be shared provincially and federally, as they could be deployed based on needs rather than provincial borders.

Further, when transportation routes are compromised, the people required to help in a disaster are equally affected. VanVactor (2012) proposes that responding organisations must be able to coordinate with emergency planners before an emergency in order to respond effectively. This may include widening or streamlining emergency management relationships to access alternative NGOs or private companies willing to act if entry points are limited. Ultimately, emergency planners must do their best to foster relationships with various private supply and transportation organisations such as provincial transportation ministries and private companies involved with transportation of food and other humanitarian supplies. By inviting organisations to train and participate in emergencies, mitigation efforts will be more effective.

References

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