



**Standard Operating Procedures
(SOP)
for
Warehouse & Inventory Management
in
UNHCR**

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Prepared by UNHCR Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) – Supply Management and Logistics Service (SMLS)

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Suggestions for corrections or improvements can be sent to:
DESS – SMLS, UNHCR, Budapest
HQSF00@unhcr.org

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Section 1: Introduction

Introduction

UNHCR's inventories represent a significant investment and following the implementation of IPSAS¹ their monetary value is disclosed in UNHCR's financial statements.

It is, therefore, the duty and responsibility of the UNHCR Supply Management function and the Warehouse Manager (regardless if they are UNHCR staff, Partners or commercial companies) to closely ensure adequate and safe storing conditions, efficient warehouse operations and complete and accurate recording of all inventory movements.

Objective

The objectives of warehouse and inventory management are to:

- Ensure satisfactory receipt of goods;
 - Provide the ability to rapidly deliver goods requested;
 - Keep accurate account of the inventory movements and balance;
 - Maintain complete and accurate records of the inventory situation (physical, reserved, buffer, on hand, distribution, contingency, temporary and in transit inventories);
 - Maintain adequate storage conditions, to ensure that the inventory is in usable or serviceable condition when needed;
 - Implement appropriated measures to guarantee the safety and security of the goods.
 - Ensure the inventory is maintained according to the Layout & Storage plan; and items are conveniently staked.
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Key principles

Effective warehouse and inventory management includes proper planning, recording, controlling and monitoring of the inventory. While the planning of transactions (objectives, needs, priorities, budget, procurement, etc.) is performed at the UNHCR operational level the execution involves the warehouse. Effective coordination and communication between the UNHCR offices and the warehouses are, therefore, essential.

Ineffective inventory management could result inter alia in incorrect quantities released, incorrect data recorded, poor decisions, excessive inventory levels, inefficient use of funds, damage and losses.

¹ International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) are a set of accounting standards issued by the IPSAS Board for use by public sector entities around the world in the preparation of financial statements

Section 2: Definitions and Scope

UNHCR Inventory

UNHCR inventories are all tangible items owned that are intended to be distributed to persons of concern. Inventories also include consumables, materials, and supplies consumed in the delivery of operations, when these items are of material value. Examples of inventory are tents, blankets and kitchen sets, etc.

UNHCR Warehouse

A UNHCR warehouse is defined as a planned space managed by either a Partner commercial entity or directly by UNHCR, where UNHCR owned inventories are stored and recorded.

Scope of the SOP

The scope of this SOP covers the responsibilities for the related processes at the UNHCR Offices holding inventories and at the level of the warehouse manager who might be UNHCR staff or staff of a Partner or a commercial entity.

Any tangible or intangible items under the custody of Partners, defined as “Goods and Property” in the Project Partnership Agreement, are out of the scope of this SOP even if these items are used to implement UNHCR projects. Such Goods and Property include:

- UNHCR Goods and Property, i.e. items provided in-kind by UNHCR to the Partner;
- Project Goods and Property; i.e. items acquired by the Partner with UNHCR funds provided pursuant to the Partner Agreement.

The management of these items will be covered by specific Guidelines to be developed based on this SOP

This SOP covers the processes for warehouse and inventory management up to the point where UNHCR inventory items are released from the UNHCR warehouse for distribution. There might be further obligations requested by UNHCR (for example reporting requirements, as detailed in the Project Partnership Agreement) but these obligations are not a part of the scope of this SOP.

Section 3: Target Audience & Document References

Target audience

This SOP is addressed to:

- Representatives;
 - UNHCR staff responsible for the supply function in field operations;
 - UNHCR staff who are custodians of inventory (Programme);
 - Warehouse managers and staff, regardless if warehouse is managed directly by UNHCR, by a Partner or a commercial company;
 - Staff in Supply Management and Logistics Service (SMLS).
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References

This document is based on the rules and regulations in Chapter 8 and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- AGREEMENT - Project Partnership (IOM/076-FOM/077/2013)
 - INSTRUCTIONS - Quarterly inventory reconciliation
 - INSTRUCTIONS - Yearly inventory physical verification
(e.g. IOM/71/FOM/72/2013)
 - HANDLING GUIDE - Insurance coverage and claim
 - INVENTORY MANAGEMENT POLICY. (IOM/99FOM/100/2013)
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Section 4: Documents

Waybill

A [Waybill](#) (see Section 10) is used as the warehouse issuing document, certifying the transfer/release of goods. It is the base document for financial transactions, such as the payment of the supplier/forwarder and the recording of the accounting entries. It is the responsibility of the Warehouse Manager to ensure that the Waybill is properly filled in, signed and filed.

The Waybill can be also referred to as the carrier document, listing the load, weight, size, final destination, etc. of the goods carried. As such, it is used as the delivery document to be presented to the receiving warehouse.

Goods Receiving Note (GRN)

The [Goods Receiving Note](#) (GRN) (see Section 10) is a standard UNHCR document to confirm receipt of goods. It is the base document for financial transactions, such as the payment of the supplier/forwarder and the recording of the accounting entries.

Bin/Stack Card²

[Bin/Stack Cards](#) (see Section 10) are standard UNHCR documents that are fitted to an item bin/stack in the warehouse. The card displays the beginning balance, movements in and out and the current balance of an item at any given time. One bin/stack should only contain one type of item from one unique Purchase Order (PO) number. The bin/stack cards facilitate picking and physical counts.

The Bin/Stack Cards must be established or updated as soon as an item is moved in or out for a specific bin/stack. The warehouse staff effecting the movement must note the approved Material Stock Request (MSR) number and sign after having updated the card.

Stock Card

The Stock Card (see Section 10) is a standard UNHCR document which consolidates the information of multiple bin/stack cards relating to the same item and PO in case it is stored in different bins/stacks of the warehouse. It should be continuously updated by the warehouse and maintained in the warehouse area.

Stock Card vs. Bin/Stack Card

In smaller warehouses, the Stock Cards provide the same information as the Bin/Stack Card. In larger warehouses the Stock Card information will consolidate the information of multiple Bin/Stack cards and show the total inventory holding of an item/PO which is stored in different bins/stacks.

² Warehouses equipped with professional inventory management system software (able to detail the location and quantity of each item & lot ID) can be exempted from maintaining bin cards.

Incoming Shipment Report

The [Incoming Shipment](#) Report (see Section 10) is a standard UNHCR document summarising all (weekly) incoming shipments to a warehouse by item, Waybill/consignment and PO number.

The report is used by the warehouse to control incoming inventory movements, and by the UNHCR office to verify that MSRP³ has been updated accordingly.

Outgoing Shipment Report

The [Outgoing Shipment](#) Report (see Section 10) is a standard UNHCR document summarising all (weekly) outgoing shipments from a warehouse by Waybill/consignment and PO number.

The report is used by the warehouse to control outgoing inventory movements, and by the UNHCR office to verify that MSRP has been updated accordingly.

Stock Report

The Stock Report is a non-standard UNHCR document used to report the inventory position/holding for all inventory items by PO, at warehouse level. The reporting frequency will be determined based on the inventory turnover rate and/or the fluctuation in demand but is normally weekly. It is the responsibility of the local UNHCR office to define the format of the report, and the reporting frequency.

The report is used by the warehouse and the UNHCR office to report the inventory holdings at warehouse and/or at country level to stock owners and other stakeholders. The reports provide timely information on inventory levels by warehouse and item which is important for operational, financial and procurement planning. It is also used as a back-up source of information in case of connectivity problems with MSRP.

Layout & Storage Plan

The Layout & Storage Plan is a non-standard UNHCR document showing by lot ID/PO where items are currently stored and where arriving items can be stored. Thus, it facilitates the picking process and warehouse management (e.g. physical verification, consolidation, warehouse space planning, etc.). It is the responsibility of the UNHCR Office to define the format to be used and to ensure proper implementation and updates.

The plan should be regularly updated so that information on free space and storage locations of items is available.

³ MSRP, Management System Renewal Project: UNHCR Enterprise Resource Planning system used for controlling a wider selection of functions within the organisation.

Section 5: Shared Responsibilities of the Warehouse and the UNHCR office

5.1 Daily Tasks

Exchange of Information

It is the responsibility of the most Senior Officer Responsible for Supply in an operation and the Warehouse Manager to ensure an exchange of information according to the obligations detailed in this SOP.

Inventory management & MSRP update

It is the responsibility of the Warehouse Manager to ensure that the UNHCR office receives the information on the transactions effected for each day: copies of GRNs, Waybills, incoming and outgoing shipment reports and quality inspection reports.

Based on the documentation received from the Warehouse it is the responsibility of the UNHCR Inventory Focal Point to update MSRP daily.

The UNHCR Inventory Focal point and the Warehouse Manager must ensure an effective flow of information to enable monitoring and control of the activities planned. Both parties are responsible to ensure that inventory records are timely and accurately updated. Any issues noted should be communicated openly and immediately between the Warehouse Manager and the UNHCR Office or vice versa and jointly addressed.

***Note:** For further information please see responsibilities of the inventory focal point detailed in Section 6.2 and responsibilities of the Warehouse Manager detailed in Section 7.2.*

5.2 Monthly Tasks

Monthly inventory reconciliation

The Warehouse Manager and the UNHCR office jointly need to perform the Monthly Inventory Reconciliation to ensure that Stock Cards and MSRP quantities match. Before this exercise it is very important to update the MSRP system with all inventory transactions completed.

In case discrepancies are identified the cause must be determined and the records corrected, if necessary. This process may include ensuring that all transactions are logged in MSRP, auditing physical warehouse files against MSRP transactions and reports, recounts of bin/stacks etc.

After the verification, a report must be sent to SMLS at Headquarters with full documentation and explanations of the discrepancies, if any.

Disposal of expired or damaged stock

When an approved Disposal Request (GS45, UNHCR form) is received from the UNHCR office the expired or damaged inventory items can be disposed of environmentally friendly and in line with local regulations.

The UNHCR office will adjust the inventory records in MSRP and the warehouse will adjust the quantities on the on the stock and stack/bin cards. The approved GS45 form needs to be printed and filed in the PO file.

5.3 Quarterly Tasks

Quarterly Inventory Verification

The UNHCR officer in charge for inventories in coordination with the Warehouse Manager must conduct a full Physical Inventory Verification quarterly.

Any discrepancy between the physical inventory as per count sheets and the MSRP stock records must be investigated and explained by the UNHCR office and the Warehouse Manager.

The UNHCR office must send the full documentation of the stock count including the reconciliation reports with full explanation for all discrepancies to SMLS.

If there is a high inventory turnover in the operation, the implementation of more frequent inventory verifications is recommended.

5.4 Yearly Tasks

Yearly Inventory Verifications

The Yearly Physical Verification of Inventories is jointly performed by UNHCR staff (Supply and Programme) and the Warehouse Manager in accordance with instructions issued (usually IOM/FOM).

As a part of this exercise, a full reconciliation between inventory quantities established by physical counts and MSRP records needs to be completed.

Any discrepancy between the physical inventory as per count sheets and the MSRP stock records must be investigated and explained by the UNHCR office and the Warehouse Manager.

The UNHCR office must send the full documentation of the stock count including the reconciliation reports with full explanation for all discrepancies to SMLS.

5.5 Handover of Responsibilities

Inventory count before handover Any change of the Warehouse Manager and/or the UNHCR Officer responsible for inventory management requires that a complete physical inventory verification exercise is conducted.

The responsible UNHCR Officer (outgoing/incoming) and the Warehouse Manager (outgoing/incoming) must conduct this as a joint exercise. In case an external warehouse manager is changing the Program Officer in charge should be involved as well. The new UNHCR Officer/Warehouse Manager in charge must sign the complete and updated inventory records for which they are taking over the responsibility.

Copies of the hand-over documentation should be stored both in the warehouse verification files and with the Supply function in the UNHCR office.

5.6 Warehouse – Main Information Sheet

Warehouse information

The Main Information Sheet of the warehouse should include details about the following:

- Address of the warehouse, and its GPS coordinates;
 - General description of the area, access roads and the surface of roads and truck manoeuvring area outside the warehouse;
 - Description of the building(s), including the type, size and condition of the building(s), storage capacity size of the area designated for UNHCR inventory storage;
 - Insurance arrangements for the building(s);
 - In case of a rented warehouse, the details of the legal owner of the building, the notice period for cancellation of rent and the monthly rental fee;
 - Description of access control and security arrangements, system for control of key(s) and the location of spare keys;
 - If the warehouse operation is outsourced, the name of the IP/commercial company operator, including the contact detail of responsible person;
 - Contact details of Warehouse Manager, the UNHCR inventory focal point and the back-up persons (both for the Warehouse and the UNHCR Office).
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Section 6: Responsibilities of the UNHCR Office

6.1 Key roles & Responsibilities

Overall Responsibility & Staffing structure

At UNHCR, the most senior officer responsible for supply in an operation is overall responsible for warehouse and inventory management. S/he must ensure that the function is properly implemented and adequately staffed and managed. This includes the daily update of MSRP with all inventory movements and providing timely reports to stakeholders.

Each operation holding inventory must have the following MSRP roles assigned to adequately trained staff:

- Inventory Focal Point / (*Supply function*);
- PO/inter-unit Material Stock Request (MSR) receiver / (*Supply function*);
- Material Stock Request (MSR) preparer / (*Supply function*);
- MSR approver / (*Program function*);
- MSR Pick & Ship function / (*Supply function*);
- Back-up for each function mentioned above.

A file detailing the persons assigned to each function must be maintained and included in the office's Delegation of Authority Plan (DOAP). The officer responsible for the Supply function shall ensure that only competent staff is assigned to perform these tasks (e.g. provided training/support/oversight).

It is the responsibility of the Supply function, in cooperation with Programme, to ensure that each warehouse (regardless if managed by UNHCR or external staff) has one designated Warehouse Manager with the overall responsibility for managing the warehouse and its operations.

6.2 Responsibilities of the Inventory Focal Point

Information to be provided to the Warehouse

To enable the warehouse to operate effectively and efficiently, the UNHCR office as a minimum needs to inform the warehouse of:

- Sourcing plan: Will assist the Warehouse Manager in calculating the storage space needs for future periods.
 - Incoming shipments: Pipeline information providing item specifications, quantities and PO/MSR numbers. It allows the Warehouse Manager to verify the documentation/specifications of the items prior to arrival and to arrange for proper receipt/inspection and storage space.
 - Distribution plans: Informed by sourcing plans and incoming pipeline information. It allows the Warehouse Manager to establish an estimated schedule for inventory movements, enabling work force and space planning.
 - Approved MSRs: Are the only valid documents authorising the Warehouse Manager to release inventory to a named organisation/entity or their representative (i.e. truck driver showing appropriate documentation).
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Daily tasks

- Update, based on documentation received from the warehouse, MSRP with PO/inter-unit MSR receipts (Waybills and Goods Receiving Notes/GRNs), and the Pick & Ship details on outgoing MSRs. MSRP should only be updated upon receipt of the above mentioned documentation.
- Initiate, based on information received from Programme or the warehouse, relevant actions related to:
 - Release Request (MSR) review;
 - MSR modifications;
 - Inventory adjustment preparation, in case of returned inventory.
- Prepare MSRs for release of inventory from the warehouse.
- Run MSRP reports, with a copy to the warehouse, to verify if the activities executed the previous day were as planned:
 1. HIN_USRQRY_STOCK report (stock report);
 2. HIN_USRQRY_SUMM OF ISSUE (releases the previous day);
 3. HIN_USRQRY_SUMM OF RECEIPTS (receipts the previous day).
- Plan warehouse incoming and outgoing flows, and run MSRP reports, with a copy to the warehouse:
 4. HIN_USRQRY_PENDING PIPELINE (Receiving Pipeline);
 5. HIN_USRQRY_PENDING IU PIPELINE (Pending InterUnit Receipt).
- Review the current inventory level against planned releases and flag the need for replenishment to the Supply Unit if the inventory levels are not adequate to meet known future demand.
- Reconcile the five MSRP reports listed above with the information and documentation received from the warehouse. Flag any outstanding (non-received) shipments, investigate the causes and clear them.
- Update the MSR file.

Weekly & Monthly tasks

- Share the (weekly) Stock Reports with relevant stakeholders in the office as per the office instructions/procedures.
 - Ensure that issues identified in the Exception reports sent by SMLS are timely addressed, rectified and reported back to SMLS. Exception reports include:
 - MSR Processed Not Approved;
 - MSR Picked Not Shipped;
 - MSR Not Picked and Shipped;
 - Receiving Pipeline;
 - Pending Inter-Unit Receipt;
 - Obsolescence Report.
 - Perform at least monthly inspection visits to the warehouse and more frequently in operations with high inventory turnover.
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6.3 Processes for Receiving and Releasing Inventory

Initiating processes

The UNHCR office shall initiate and approve the receiving of consignments at or releasing of inventory from a warehouse.

- Receipt of inventory at a UNHCR warehouse requires valid shipping documents verifying the following consignment details:
 - UNHCR Warehouses can only receive inventories that are procured for and owned by UNHCR and any consignment delivered should have a UNHCR PO number reference (this is also applicable for donations (DONIK⁴ POs).
 - In order to properly receive the items in the warehouse the responsible officer in the UNHCR office must ensure that all relevant information is provided to the warehouse, preferably well in advance of the delivery.
- The warehouse is not allowed to dispatch any inventory without receiving a completed and approved MSR from the UNHCR office. For external MSRs, a valid Chart Field combination must be entered before it can be approved.

Note: For further information please see UNHCR's Supply Manual, Chapter 8, Part 4: Warehouse Management; Section 4: Releasing and Returning stock

6.4 Rectifying Errors

Reviewing of MSRs

Supply staff has to review the Release Request and if inconsistencies are noted the following applies.

If...	Then...
The quantity asked for in the Release Request is greater than the available quantity.	Resolve with the UNHCR office and amend the Release Request. Prepare the MSR according to the revised details.
The customer has requested goods which are currently not in the pipeline or the warehouse.	Check with Sourcing staff. Discuss with the customer (prior to creating the MSR) and issue a modified MSR or cancel the Release Request.
Additional items are expected to arrive later than the MSR distribution dates.	Consult with the customer and agree a revised distribution schedule. Create MSR with modified schedule.

⁴ DONIK = donations in kind

Modification of MSRs Supply staff may need to modify or cancel the MSR, if it has not been shipped and/or if it was changed, as follows.

If...	Then...
A customer sends a modification to a Release Request for which a MSR has already been created.	The MSR should be modified as per the updated Release Request. Inform the warehouse accordingly.
Additional goods are needed.	Change the MSR to reflect the increased quantity. Inform the warehouse to reserve.
If the quantities of goods is reduced.	Change the MSR to reflect the reduced quantity. Inform the warehouse to 'un-reserve'.
MSR is no longer needed due to a modification or a change to the Release Request.	Cancel the MSR and 'un-reserve' the surplus. Inform the warehouse accordingly.

6.5 Return of Goods

Introduction Items ordered and delivered might have to be returned to the vendor or the dispatching warehouse due to:

- Defect or damages;
- Duplicate orders or overdeliveries;
- Delayed delivery (in case items are no longer required).

Note: For further information please see UNHCR's Supply Manual, Chapter 8, Part 4: Warehouse Management; Section 4: Releasing and Returning stock.

Process for returning to vendor If goods are returned or rejected for quality reasons the vendor has to replace them or issue a credit note.

Note: For further information please see UNHCR's Supply Manual, Chapter 8, Part 4: Warehouse Management; Section 4: Releasing and Returning stock.

Returning dispatched inventory Return of inventory items dispatched from a warehouse should be an exception and avoided by carefully planning the distribution quantities.

If a dispatch, or part of it, is nevertheless returned to the issuing warehouse, the items are to be recorded back to MSRP. This cannot be done at the country level, therefore, the UNHCR office needs to inform SMLS at Headquarters about the details of the adjustment required.

Note: For further information please see UNHCR's Supply Manual, Chapter 8, Part 4: Warehouse Management; Section 4: Releasing and Returning stock.

6.6 Recording of Transactions in MSRP

Recording of transactions

The UNHCR office must ensure that the MSRP Inventory module is updated daily with all inventory transactions, i.e. PO/inter-unit MSR receipts and MSR Pick & Ship (dispatch).

Inventory transaction may only be recorded in MSRP upon receipt of documentation from the warehouse providing proof of the physical movement, such as Waybills and GRNs.

6.7 Document Management

Document management

The UNHCR office shall establish a filing system for hardcopy documents related to warehouse transactions and inventory holdings, and retain them for five years. The following documents need to be filed:

- Contracts/POs;
 - Goods Receiving Notes (GRNs);
 - Waybills and Delivery Notes;
 - Inspection & Weekly reports;
 - Bin/Stack Cards & Stock Cards;
 - Inventory counting sheets;
 - Loss/Damage forms;
 - Import/export documents.
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6.8 Insurance

Obligation & references

The UNHCR staff responsible for the warehouse management must arrange adequate insurance for inventories stored, preferably through the global insurance policy offered by SMLS, or, if this is not feasible, through a local insurance company. Regarding further details on the global insurance policy managed by SMLS please refer to the Insurance Coverage and Claim Handling Guide.

Note: For further information please see UNHCR's Supply Manual, Chapter 8, Part Warehouse Management; Section 4-2-8

Section 7: Responsibilities of the Warehouse

7.1 Key Roles & Responsibilities

Responsibilities & Staffing structure

All UNHCR warehouses⁵ need to have competent personnel and adequate equipment and material to manage and control the warehouse and the inventories. In addition, the organisational structure needs to be defined detailing the authority, responsibility and accountability of each role in the warehouse.

It is the responsibility of the Warehouse Manager to ensure that the following key roles and responsibilities are assigned⁶:

Roles	Responsibilities
Warehouse Manager / Supervisor / Storekeeper	Oversee the warehouse operations. Control storage, movement and receipt/issue of inventory.
Controller / Tally clerk(s)	Match physical quantities against receipt/release documents and ensure that inventory records (Bin/Stack & Stock Cards) match physical inventory.
Record-keepers	Update and track inventory files and shipping documents, ensure proper filing routines.
Security	Ensure 24 hour protection of warehouse premises and items stored.

All warehouse staff should recognise their responsibility for the caretaking of the inventories during receipt, storage and dispatch, including the handling and filing of documents. It is equally important that all warehouse functions including load masters, loaders, tally clerks, cleaners, casual workers, etc. have clear job descriptions detailing the procedures to be followed. Their job descriptions should include:

- Clearly defined responsibilities;
- Defined tasks to be performed ;
- Planned working hours and shifts;
- Defined standards for good job performance;
- Documents to be used and document flows;
- Usage of tools and equipment.

All staff should be trained to perform their functions, and regular staff meetings be held, specifically on safety and quality assurance matters.

⁵ A UNHCR warehouse is defined as a planned space managed by either a Partner, commercial entity or directly by UNHCR, where UNHCR owned goods are stored, and recognized in the UNHCR financial statement (as defined in Section 1 of present SOP).

⁶ In larger warehouses it is recommended to separate the roles while in smaller warehouses one person might have to assume multiple roles.

7.2 Responsibilities of the Warehouse Manager

Information to be provided to the UNHCR office

The Warehouse Manager must ensure that the UNHCR office receives the following information in timely manner:

- Daily: Incoming/Outgoing Shipment reports; Copies of GRNs, Waybills & Quality Inspection reports;
 - Weekly (or as otherwise instructed): Stock reports (detailing in/out movements and balances);
 - Monthly: Copies of Stock Cards (also those where the quantity has reached zero during the reporting period);
 - Quarterly: Physical Inventory Verification reports.
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Daily tasks

It is the responsibility of the Warehouse Manager to plan and implement the daily activities based on information of in/out movements, control activities, etc. received from the UNHCR office.

- Verify all inventories and check if they are owned by UNHCR. In case of non-UNHCR inventory discovered notify the UNHCR office immediately;
 - Control the storage conditions (general condition and cleanness, etc.);
 - Control that the stacking of items is appropriate and safe;
 - Check the quality of the inventory, if the bottom layer is elevated from the floor and if items are damaged;
 - Verify that all bins/stacks have Bin/Stack Cards;
 - Verify that Bin/Stack Cards & Stock Cards are timely updated;
 - Check that the Layout & Storage plan is updated and matching the physical placement of inventory in the storage area;
 - Check the completeness of documents, handling and filing routines, in the storage area and in the warehouse office (receipt, signatures, updating, etc.);
 - Ensure the correctness of documents, such as Incoming/Outgoing Shipment reports, Waybills, GRNs, Inspection reports, etc. and ensure they are finalised and delivered to the UNHCR office as instructed;
 - In case of inventory discrepancies investigate and notify the UNHCR office as soon as possible (this includes discrepancies between warehouse records and the reports from the UNHCR office);
 - Verify that personnel report at the start of their shift, verify absences, train newly recruited personnel in their tasks, plan for and task personnel for the activities to take place;
 - Inspect the general condition of the warehouse premises;
 - Ensure cleanliness of the building and premises, and ensure that waste disposal routines are environmental friendly.
 - Security and safety checks
-

7.3 Layout & Storage Plan

Objectives & References

One of the main objectives of warehouse management is to ensure that inventories stored for a shorter or longer periods of time are in the best possible condition when dispatched for use by the beneficiaries. The Layout & Storage plan is a tool to manage space utilisation in the warehouse.

A clear segregation between inventory items owned by UNHCR and other goods must be maintained in case the warehouse is shared with other organizations, or when the warehouse operator stores goods for other clients in the same locality.

Layout & Storage plan

All warehouses should maintain a Layout and Storage Plan based on a grid layout, showing where the different items are stored, and update it regularly. The storage areas should be marked by chalk/paint on the floor and include area, row and aisle identification codes (e.g.: grid Area 2/Row A/Aisle 1).

As a minimum of five areas should be designated:

1. Office area;
2. Goods receiving area;
3. Goods storage area(s) (can include outdoor space);
4. Damaged/expired goods area;
5. Staging/loading area for items picked and ready for release.

Further areas can be required for larger warehouses such as:

- Sealed/locked area, for attractive and/or high value items;
- Spare parts storage area;
- Temperature controlled/cold chain storage area;
- Dangerous goods area (pesticides, fuel, etc.).

When developing the Layout & Storage plan, the following must be ensured:

- Separate food and non-food item storage areas;
 - Store items on pallets (food always, Core Relief Items (CRI's) preferably);
 - Allow at least one meter space around stacks and between stacks, walls, pillars, beams or other obstructions, for ventilation and manoeuvring;
 - Store different consignments (lot IDs/PO numbers) of the same item in separate stacks;
 - Use the FIFO⁷ (first in, first out) principle, unless special circumstances such as emergencies require to deviate;
 - Record the location of stock in the Layout & Storage plan, and the Stock Card, and include the following details:
 - Storage area code (e.g.: grid: Area 1/Row A/Aisle 2);
 - Commodity code or description of the item;
 - Lot ID/PO number of the item.
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⁷ First in, first out. Turnover of stock procedure requiring first receipts to be issued/used first (not applied as evaluation method)

7.4 Safety and Security of Stock

Safety and Security of Stock

Goods should be protected from the risks of fire, loss, breakage, damage and theft. A security risk assessment and facilities assessment should be undertaken. The warehouse shall prepare an infrastructure plan covering:

- Security lighting, evacuation plan (escape exits) and assembly points clearly identified and marked;
 - Appropriated fencing and other security measures as alarms; perimeter walls/fences towards adjoining buildings/areas. This may include security guards/ response plan / support from Host Government Security Forces;
 - No smoking policy;
 - Firefighting equipment and fire safety plan;
 - Limited and controlled entry/exit to the warehouse/storage area;
 - Storage requirements for hazardous goods (especially fuel);
 - Special storage and security conditions for high value items;
 - Incident response plan.
-

Hazardous Goods

Hazardous, flammable or explosive materials need to be stored away from inhabited areas and surrounded by metal or masonry barriers. In addition, the following applies:

- Keep hazardous goods away from other products, especially foodstuffs;
- Be aware of the different hazard classes and which hazardous/dangerous goods that cannot be stored together;
- All hazardous/dangerous goods must be appropriately marked with markings/stickers on the goods/packing;
- All staff must be informed about handling, preventive and mitigating actions, place accident cards on the stack and in the warehouse office;
- Provide protective clothing such as goggles and gloves when necessary;
- Proximity to hazardous substance manufacturers should be avoided.

Note: *Paint, fertilisers, pesticides, disinfectants and water treatment chemicals are examples of materials which are potentially hazardous.*

Fire

Fire is a major safety and security hazard in a warehouse. Some items (e.g. petrol) may catch fire spontaneously as a result of natural heating.

- Take special precautions with hazardous, inflammable or explosive materials;
 - Ensure regular inspection by firefighting authorities;
 - Provide fire extinguishers, regularly maintained (available and tested);
 - Post and circulate fire prevention and extinction instructions;
 - Organise regular fire drills;
 - Place sand buckets and shovels near main exits;
 - Prohibit smoking in the warehouse area;
 - Nominate and train fire wardens;
 - Regularly control the status of the electrical systems;
 - Maintain list of relevant emergency contact numbers.
-

Flood and water damage

Take precautions to prevent water damage, e.g. by elevating the bottom layer of stacks from the floor. Repair and replace roofs during the dry season.

Access control

- Restrict access to the storage area to authorised personnel only.
 - Arrange for security services and establish inspection routines.
 - Establish strict controls of access to keys.
 - Establish vehicle and personnel checking and control routines at gates.
-

Pest control

Insects and rodents attack foodstuffs and paper products, as well as textiles. It is estimated that insects and rodents damage as much as 10% of stored cereals on average worldwide, with as much as 30% damaged in subtropical regions, especially when foodstuffs are stored over long periods.

To reduce potential losses, follow the below guidelines:

Topic	Guidelines
Storage period	Never store susceptible foodstuffs for longer than four months.
Infestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Separate and treat infected goods when detected.• Inspect all potentially affected stocks every two weeks, and take immediate remedial action (as spraying, dusting or fumigating with pesticides). If part of a consignment needs to be fumigated, the entire warehouse must be fumigated. <p><i>Note: Seek expert advice on chemicals to use and dangers related to humans.</i></p>
Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control regularly for rats, mice, cockroaches and birds (they carry parasites that can spread diseases).
Pest control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use preventative and curative methods to kill insects at all stages of their development.• Take care not to damage commodities, nor endanger humans working with or consuming the goods.
Fumigation (prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spray during bagging or when loading goods.• Mark consignment with: date of fumigation, chemicals used and expected duration of the protection.
Fumigation (treatment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fumigate in a closed, preferably airtight space.• Fumigate when the insects are most active, usually just before nightfall, close warehouse for at least 24 hours afterwards. <p><i>Note: Seek expert advice on chemicals to use, usage/handling, quarantine periods before consumption/use and dangers related to humans.</i></p>
Chemicals	Keep all pest control chemicals in a separate locked store.

Perishable goods control

Special attention should be paid to perishable goods, and appropriate systems and monitoring routines should be in place to manage perishable consumables.

The warehouse management should develop a system notifying about expiry dates, and inform UNHCR well in advance (at least 60 days prior to expiry).

7.5 Stacking

Introduction

Appropriate and careful stacking is essential to ensure the stability of stacks, maximise the use of space, facilitate stocktaking and prevent damage or loss to goods being stored.

Stacking principles

Follow the below general stacking principles and guidelines:

Topic	Guidelines
Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never store goods directly on the warehouse floor, elevate to avoid moisture.• Never store goods directly against walls, pipes, or supports as stacks place stress on the structures, will hamper access and could expose goods to moisture.• ‘Bond’ stacks of rectangular bags or boxes by orienting every other layer in different directions, to prevent the stack from falling over.
Stacking order	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep different items, packages and consignments in different stacks.• Ensure that perishable goods can be rotated, if necessary.• Ensure that all stacks, including older stacks placed in the rear areas, are accessible so that the FIFO principle can be applied.
Light and ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limit stack sizes to a maximum of 6 by 6 meters to prevent excessive floor load and pressure damage to packaging or contents inside the stack.• The maximum height of stacks depends on the type of goods and their packing, ensure safe storage and handling for warehouse workers.
Damaged goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stack damaged goods separately, repair or repack (if possible) and issue first if they are usable.• Do not mix different types of damaged goods together.
Open areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Separate foodstuffs from other supplies to avoid contamination.• Store fuels, lubricants and other hazardous substances in a separate building or a protected area.
Rotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rotate or turn goods over periodically.
Bottles & Cans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stack packages containing cans or bottles upright.

Stacking different units

As a general principle, issue goods in their smallest possible units, to simplify later distribution.

Repackaging: If goods are issued in a form different from their distributing needs, or different customers need different packaging unit sizes, some repackaging may be required.

Follow the below guidelines stacking different packaging units and goods:

Items	Guidelines
Bags & Tents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure the floor is levelled and strong.• Use dunnage (such as pallets, wooden planks, etc.) to elevate the bottom layer of bags from the floor, to for allow air circulation and prevention against moisture.• Check the stability of the stack while stacking, and in particular when reaching a height of five layers.• Ensure that the lower layer packs can sustain the weight.• Plan aisle space (1 metre) between stacks, and between the stacks and the walls.• Use either ‘criss-cross’ stacking (orienting every other layer of bags in different directions) or the block method (bags oriented both length-wise and width-wise in one layer, and a reversed pattern in the next layer).• Do not exceed the maximum safety height of 6 metres when stacking bags.

Elevation of bottom layer

Dunnage or pallets should always be used to elevate the bottom layer of goods from the floor and to allow for air circulation. Pallets should be clean, level and free of projecting nails or splinters. Swipe and clean the floor prior to placing the dunnage/pallet, as spilled grains would for example be attractive for rodents and insects.

If wooden pallets are not available Supply staff can arrange with suppliers to deliver goods palletised, to arrange for pallets from a logistics service provider or to use loose planks, thick woven mats or plastic sheeting.

7.6 Warehouse Supplies & Equipment

Supplies & Forms

Ensure that the following forms are always available in sufficient quantities:

- Stock Cards;
 - Bin Cards;
 - Numbered Waybills (D015);
 - Numbered Goods Receiving Notes (GRNs);
 - Forms, ledgers and other stationary.
-

Basic warehouse equipment

For the warehouse to function properly, the following basic equipment must be made available:

- First aid kits (and medical plan) in case a person is injured;
 - Telephone or radio communications link;
 - Internet/fax connection (if possible, internet connection should be arranged to facilitate exchange of information with the UNHCR office);
 - Computer & multifunction printer (copier, printers, scanner, fax);
 - Tools for opening cases, such as hammers, crowbars, steel cutters etc.;
 - Spare sacks, needles, twine and small containers or cartons to repack supplies when packaging has been damaged;
 - Scales for weighing commodities, suitable size sieves, and two wheeled hand and/or jack trolleys for moving goods;
 - Brooms, dust pans, brushes and rubbish bins;
 - First aid kit, flashlights, fire extinguishers and other firefighting equipment, both inside and outside the storage building;
 - Power cables or extension leads and compressed air unions;
 - Provision of stand-by generators if the electric supply is not stable.
-

Specialised equipment

The potential need for power generators, forklifts and conveyors to handle large quantities of supplies or heavy items should be determined with the help of expert advice.

7.7 Receiving Consignments

Important remark

UNHCR Warehouses should only store inventories owned by UNHCR, and all consignments should have an UNHCR PO number reference (this is also applicable for donations (DONIK POs)). UNHCR should be clearly stated as the consignee on the Waybill (Bill of Lading, Air Waybill, Delivery Note from manufacturer, CMR⁸ etc.) or other official cargo documents.

The responsible officer in the UNHCR office must ensure that all relevant delivery information is provided to the warehouse well before the actual delivery (as detailed in Section 5 of this SOP).

Objectives

The Warehouse Manager is responsible for the physical receipt of goods, confirming that the quantity and quality of the goods received is according to the specifications. In addition, s/he needs to verify if the shipping documents received are in order and inform the UNHCR office after completion of receipt. An effective receiving process ensures that goods are properly inspected and received, stacked away and stored, that inventory records are timely updated and the required documentation sent to the UNHCR office for update of MSRP.

⁸ CMR, Convention of Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road

Within the goods receiving area

First visual inspection & checking of shipping documents

Firstly, execute a visual inspection of the truck(s). Check if the goods are visibly in accordance with the shipping documents (waybills, container seal number, container number, date recorded, etc.).

Inspect the goods for obvious visible damages or loss (e.g. bad quality canvas on the truck, holes in the container, destroyed outer packing, etc.).

Offloading & inspecting for damage or loss

Goods should be carefully offloaded and handled to minimize damage following these general handling guidelines, if possible:

- Avoid outside offloading during rain;
- Use forklifts for large or heavy items;
- Use trolleys for lighter ones;
- Do not drag, drop or throw items.

Follow the below steps when receiving/inspecting the consignment:

Step	Action
1	If there is visible damage or non-conformity with shipping documents, immediately take photos using a digital camera or a mobile phone, inform the responsible UNHCR officer, stop offloading and reject the consignment. Visible damage or non-conformity can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water stains on packing; • Crushed boxes; • Date of expiry passed on packaging labels; • Goods are obviously not what was indicated on the shipping document; • Lacking PO number and/or goods not marked for UNHCR.
2	If there is any doubt unpack goods samples for further inspection.
3	If there is no obvious visible damage remove packaging and spot check some items in the presence of the carrier to ensure that the goods conform to specifications. Performing simple quality control tests (in particular for locally procured items). Weight scale and measuring meter must as a minimum be available in the warehouse (weight is often used as an inspection parameter for sealed boxes).
4	If goods are damaged, short-landed or not of the expected quality note the details on shipping document and fill in the Loss/Damage form (with photos if possible). Inform and send the documents to the UNHCR office on the same day.

Confirming receipt

Confirmation of receipt is a necessary step to verify that the supplier of the goods and transport service supplier have fulfilled their obligations and is the basis to release the payment to the supplier(s).

In the warehouse, a GRN should be issued as the proof of delivery for the particular shipment/consignment (*Note: one GRN per truck*). Obtain the signature of the transporter on the Waybill and the GRN and date all documents.

In the event of lost or damaged goods follow the instructions provided by the UNHCR office. The warehouse has to confirm the receipt and a prepare a Loss/Damage form in order for the UNHCR office to initiate necessary complaint actions (Protest Letter and Claim Initiation) against the supplier and/or transporter.

Assigning goods to a storage location ('put away')

Store the goods

Once the warehouse manager has accepted all or parts of a consignment, store the goods as follows:

If the consignment is for...	Then...
An existing PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Store the goods in the same place as the previous shipment.• Update the Bin/Stack and Stock Cards.• File the shipping documents and the GRN in the existing PO file.
A new PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Store the goods in an appropriate location, according to the Layout & Storage plan. Update the plan. Note: Only <u>one</u> item from <u>one</u> PO per bin/stack.• Create Bin/Stack and Stock Cards. Ensure that the card is physically attached to the bin/stack.• Create a new PO file and file the shipping documents and the GRN in it.

Updating Stock records

Updating inventory records

At the end of each working day, the Warehouse Manager needs to ensure that:

- The GRNs, Bin/Stack and Stock Cards, PO files and the Layout & Storage plan have been properly updated;
 - The Incoming/Outgoing Shipment report is updated;
 - Necessary documents (GRNs, Shipping documents, etc.) are collected and sent to the UNHCR office.
-

7.8 Return of Goods

Returning items/inventory

Items that have been inspected may need to be returned either to the vendor or the dispatching warehouse because they were discovered to be:

- Defective or damaged;
 - Duplicate or shipped in excess of PO quantity;
 - The wrong items;
 - Not delivered on time and no longer required.
-

Rules for return to vendor

The process of returning goods to the vendor shall be managed by the responsible officer in the UNHCR office providing clear instructions to the Warehouse Manager.

Returning dispatched inventory

Return of dispatched inventory from an UNHCR controlled warehouse should be an exception. If a dispatch, or part of it, is nevertheless returned to the issuing warehouse the warehouse should immediately contact the UNHCR office to receive instructions on how to handle the returns in different situations, for example:

If...	Then...
The same goods can or will be re-dispatched to the same location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep them overnight on the truck (if it can be secured). • Do not adjust documentation.
The goods are to be dispatched to a different location.	Adjust the appropriate documents in the warehouse.
After dispatch, some or all the goods in a shipment are returned to a warehouse and added to existing stock.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a GRN, to register the shipment as an “incoming” shipment under the same PO that it was shipped out with. • Note why the goods were returned on the Waybill.
Goods returned are in ‘good order’.	Return to their original storage location in the warehouse.
Goods are damaged.	Place them in the damaged goods section of the warehouse and take action to repair or dispose of them.

When receiving the approval from the UNHCR office, the regular processes for receiving consignments (including the first visual inspection, the offloading & inspecting for damage or loss, etc.) must be followed.

These goods must be clearly marked and stored separately as the returned goods cannot be dispatched again before the inventory adjustment process has been confirmed by the UNHCR office.

7.9 Release of Goods

Important remark

It is not allowed to issue inventory from an UNHCR warehouse managed by a Partner without a duly approved Material Stock Request (MSR⁹) sent from the UNHCR office to the warehouse.

In order to execute the release the UNHCR officer in charge of inventory must ensure that all relevant information and documentation is received by the warehouse in due time before the physical release (as detailed in Section 5 of this SOP).

Objectives for releasing goods

Goods are approved/authorized for release from the warehouse for the following purposes:

- Distribution externally to UNHCR (External release);
- Transfer to another UNHCR warehouse (InterUnit transfer);
- Internal UNHCR consumption (Internal issue);
- Disposal following the appropriate authorization (a process completely managed and controlled by the UNHCR office).

Following the release of inventory, the warehouse inventory records and stock as well as stack/bin cards must be updated in a timely manner, all relevant information/ documentation must be filed and documents need to be sent to the UNHCR office for update of MSRP.

Reserving stock

When receiving an approved MSR from the UNHCR office the Warehouse Manager should 'reserve' the inventory as specified in the MSR (PO number(s) of items to be picked are stated in the MSR) to ensure that it will not be accidentally released with another MSR.

Picking stock

The warehouse staffs needs to 'pick' the goods from the storage area based on the MSR, and place them in the assigned staging area.

For larger shipments, the warehouse needs to prepare a loading plan and schedule, taking into account the physical limitations of the warehouse and the warehouse area, number of loading gates, country limitations on weight and volume of trucks, etc.

As soon as the goods are moved from the storage area to the staging area, the Bin/Stack and Stock Cards must be updated.

⁹ The UNHCR ERP system created MSR shall be used whenever possible but if a field location is not connected, the D017 form is to be used and the ERP system Inventory Module updated as soon as possible by the UNHCR office.

Staging area Goods picked must be properly stacked in the staging area, ensuring a clear separation between the different MSRs.

Items requiring packing must be packed and a packing list needs to be prepared.

Ensure that all relevant MSR information is displayed on each stack in the staging area to avoid possible mistakes during the loading process.

Prepare Waybills For any issue of inventory from a UNHCR warehouse a Waybill must be issued, countersigned by the receiver upon delivery of the goods and the original signed Waybill must be returned to the warehouse.

Inspecting outgoing shipment It is highly recommended that the controller/tally clerks or security guards count during loading to ensure that the vehicle is loaded as planned and in accordance with the Waybill.

Direct release If goods are taken directly from the UNHCR warehouse by the consignee s/he or her/his representative must sign the Waybill when taking over the custody of the goods. The Waybill will act as proof of delivery.

The responsibility of UNHCR Supply function and the warehouse ends when the Waybill is duly signed by the consignee and the original returned to the warehouse.

Updating stock records At the end of each working day, the Warehouse Manager needs to ensure that:

- Waybills, PO files, Bin/Stack and Stock Cards and the Layout & Storage plan have been properly updated;
- The Incoming/Outgoing Shipment Report is completed for the movements of the day.

7.10 Document Management & Filing

Document management It is the responsibility of the Warehouse Manager to establish an internal system ensuring that relevant documents are properly issued, filled in and filed.

The two main documents providing proof of transactions based on which payments are released and MSRP records are updated are the GRN and the Waybill.

Document management
Continued

It is recommended that the warehouse maintains two different files, both of which must be retained for five years:

1. The PO file containing all related transaction documents such as:
 - GRNs;
 - All shipping documents received with the consignment(s) (e.g. Delivery Notes, Waybills, Packaging lists, Customs document);
 - Inspection documents prepared by the warehouse, such as Receipt report, Quality Inspection report, copy of Inventory Verification report in case of discrepancies, etc.;
 - Stock and Bin/Stack Cards;
 - Approved MSRs and issuing Waybills;
 - Lost/Damage forms, if any.

 2. The Inventory Verification files containing all documents related to physical verifications, including Monthly Reconciliations and quarterly/annual Physical Stock Counts.
-

7.11 Maintaining the Premises

Maintaining & cleaning

To maintain the premises, a cleaning and garbage disposal plan needs to be developed for the warehouse.

The plan should include the tasks, and timing of those, for the warehouse staff and cleaning personnel. Further, the plan needs to detail how waste is to be handled, and the dedicated areas for the different types of waste or surplus packing material.

The plan needs to ensure:

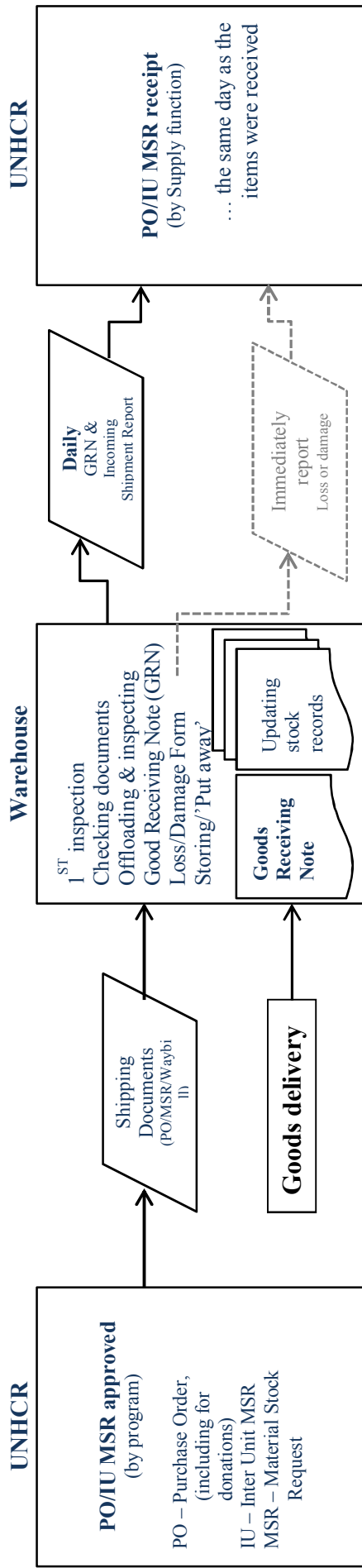
- Daily: That dirt, rubbish and smaller quantities of spillage are removed from the storage areas and the floor is swept.

 - Weekly: That appropriate disposal of all types of waste, including oil, toxic and hazardous waste, and surplus packing material is taking place.

 - Periodically: That the entire warehouse is cleaned from top to bottom and from the furthest point towards the main exit including: walls, stacks, floors, wall/floor joints and corners, roof beams, top of walls, doors, frames and door channels. Smaller damages to the warehouse building should be fixed as a part of the periodical check of the premises
-

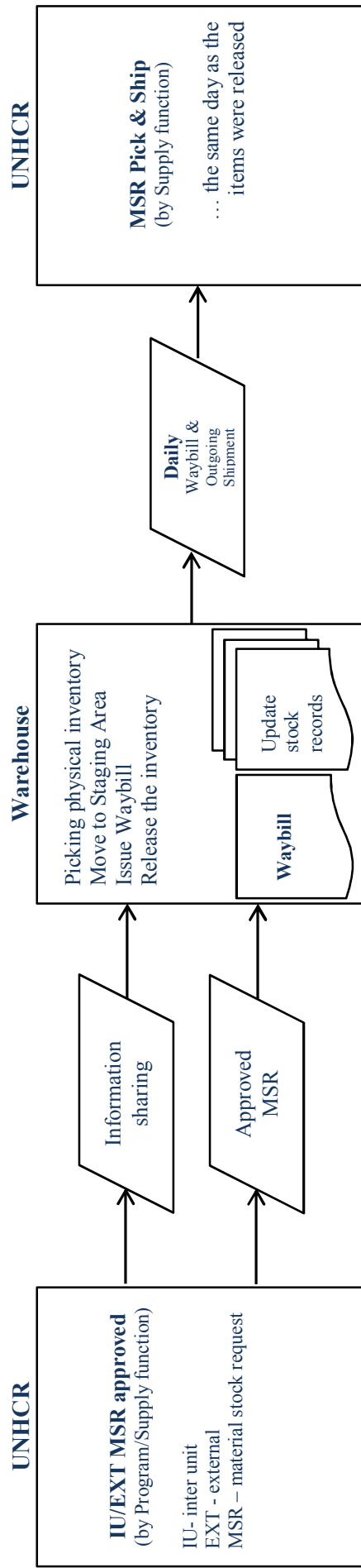
Section 8: Process Overview

Receiving consignments



Warehouse can only receive goods that are owned by UNHCR, and identified with a UNHCR PO number

Releasing goods



Warehouse can only release goods after receiving an approved MSR from the UNHCR office

Section 9: List of Abbreviations

List of abbreviations

DESS	Division of Emergency, Security and Supply
CMR	Convention of Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road
CRI	Core Relief Item
DOAP	Delegation of Authority Plan
DONIK	Donations in kind
FIFO	First in, first out. Turnover of stock procedure requiring first receipts to be issued/used first. UNHCR does not use FIFO as an evaluation method
GRN	Goods Receiving Note
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) are a set of accounting standards issued by the IPSAS Board for use by public sector entities around the world in the preparation of financial statements
LOT ID	Lot identification number assigned to a particular quantity or lot of material from a single manufacturer
MSR	Material Stock Request (MSR)
MSRP	Management System Renewal Project; UNHCR Enterprise Resource Planning system used for controlling a wider selection of functions within the organisation.
PO	Purchase Order
SMLS	Supply Management and Logistics Service (SMLS)
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures

Stock Card



STOCK CARD

Supply Management and Logistics Service

WAREHOUSE		PAGE	
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PO NUMBER		ITEM	
PACKING UNIT		OPENING BALANCE	DATE

NO	DATE	IN	OUT	ADJ	CLOSING STOCK	REMARKS
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						

PREPARED BY <small>(NAME, TITLE)</small>		SIGNATURE
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FORM CODE : D016

Bin/Stack Card

 UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés		BIN/STACK CARD Supply Management and Logistics Service		
WAREHOUSE			PAGE	
PO NUMBER	ITEM			
PACKING UNIT	OPENING BALANCE	DATE		
NO	DATE	MSR Number	IN	OUT
			ADJ	CLOSING STOCK
			REMARKS	UPDATED BY (NAME, SIGNATURE)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

FORM CODE : D016B

