



The Logistics of Humanitarian Aid & Disaster Relief

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...If only the logistics of transporting relief items were easy....Bringing aid and relief to people in need demands customised and pragmatic planning and execution from relief agencies.

Lynn Fritz of the Fritz Institute says that disaster relief is 80% logistics "Relief Organisations face unique logistics challenges, in the commercial world companies deal with predictable circumstances. Most companies have a familiar group of suppliers, vendors, carriers and other partners that provide regular service. In humanitarian relief that kind of routine doesn't exist." He Believes "Disasters are unpredictable and create unpredictable needs. They tend to occur in remote places; even when they happen in a developed area, basic infrastructure is likely to be disrupted."

Improving the Supply Chains of humanitarian Relief Organisations is seen by many as the ultimate logistics challenge. Most relief agencies and other such organizations are not set up to handle the complicated workings of the supply chain. Aid groups struggle with non-cash donations, perishable goods often rot before they reach their intended destinations. Money is alot earier and cheaper to send. Frequently, countries that experience a disaster are flooded with tons of supplies, putting a great burden on already stretched relief staff who then must categorize and dispose of the material. Humanitarian supply logistics systems must be effectively coordinated to help people in disasters or emergency situations.