

A VACCINE SECURITY CHECKLIST FOR
COVID-19
VACCINE DISTRIBUTION



Operation Warp Speed (OWS) is a public-private partnership initiated by the U.S. government to facilitate and accelerate the development, manufacturing, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. An operation of this magnitude has never been attempted in the history of the United States. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has committed top fast-tracking approvals for any viable COVID-19 vaccine that meets their acceptable criteria. Once a vaccine is approved, the work of distributing it throughout the country begins.

CHALLENGES OF DISTRIBUTION //

As of today, many of the vaccines that have been approved or are on their way to becoming approved have one major challenge in their distribution: Once manufactured, they must be stored and transported at super sub-freezing temperatures. While this is not completely atypical; it does pose a challenge due to the unprecedented scale of and scope of this production.

Each vaccine will make its way from manufacturing to secure distribution centers located throughout the United States. These major centers will then transport the vaccines to their final distribution location – a pharmacy, hospital, clinic, etc. The vaccines cannot be directly sent to these locations because these facilities do not have the amount of sub-freezing storage space needed to maintain the integrity of a large shipment of vaccine.

While each state anxiously awaits their allotment of the approved COVID-19 vaccine, they are working with private distribution centers to accommodate their needs for storage and safe distribution. Besides the operational hurdles involved in getting a local COVID-19 vaccine distribution center up and running, security has become a hot button topic for each state - securing the transportation of the vaccine from major distribution hubs to the final distribution sites, but also – securing the Vaccine Distribution Sites themselves.

SECURING THE COVID-19 VACCINE DISTRIBUTION CENTERS //

COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Centers play a pivotal role in the COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan: they are the endpoint for delivery of the vaccine to individuals. These sites include hospitals, long-term care facilities, commercial and independent pharmacies, local health departments, mass vaccination point of dispensing sites (MVS/PODs), mobile vaccination units (push PODs), businesses, schools, colleges and universities, homeless shelters, correctional facilities and sites where target populations gather.

Securing these sites is critical to a safe and successful immunization strategy. The low initial supply of COVID-19 vaccines makes them a prime target for theft, counterfeiting and illegal diversions by criminals and foreign countries. Vaccination databases also store a wealth of information valuable to hackers. COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Center security is not a one-size-fits-all discussion. There are many aspects to this type of security that must be considered.

Whether you are a pharmacy that regularly distributes vaccines or a school that will host a temporary vaccine site, there are steps all Vaccine Distribution Centers can take to ensure safe vaccine distribution. Follow the checklist below to make sure your site remains secure and incident-free.

SITE ASSESSMENTS //

It's important to do site assessments anytime Vaccine Distribution Centers deal with a high-risk event. Think of it like checking the tires before a big road trip. These evaluations look at potential security threats, both physical and online, and the impacts on your site should those threats come to fruition. Security Site Assessors then look at the vulnerabilities within your organization that need to be mitigated through additional security measures. You'll walk away with a list of practical mitigation strategies you can implement immediately.

MONITORING & INTELLIGENCE //

One of the best tools your Vaccine Distribution Center can use to mitigate threats is proactive monitoring and intelligence. With the vaccines being prime targets for criminals and foreign state actors, organizations that can quickly sift through the latest information from federal, state and local law enforcement, as well as publicly available data, will have a better chance of preventing a major incident. Your Vaccine Distribution Center can engage 24/7 coverage through a Global Security Operations Center (GSOC) or Mobile Command Center.



EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE PROTECTION //

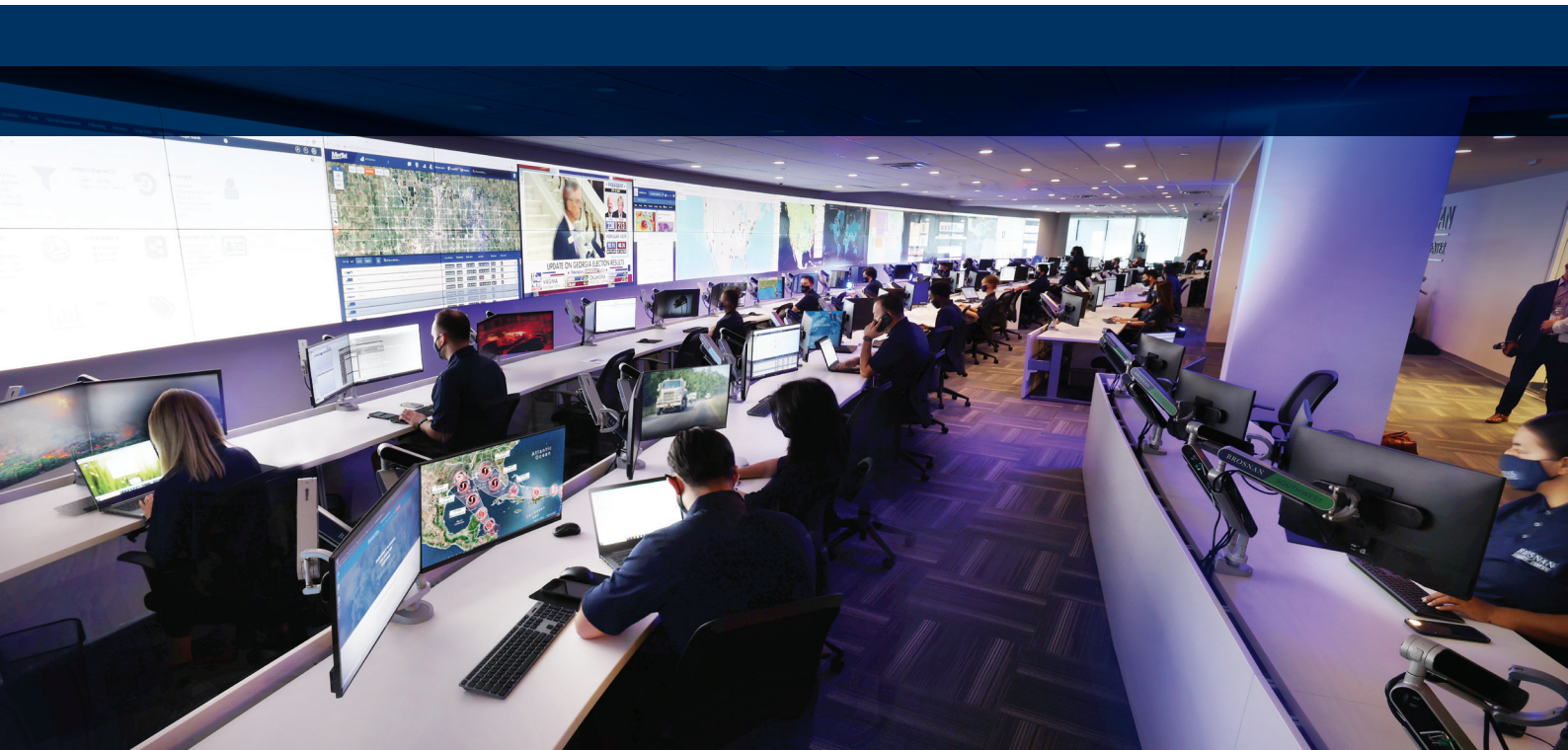
It's important to realize that every person involved in the COVID-19 vaccine distribution could be at risk. Criminals look for the weakest link — that includes targeting executives and medical professionals who may grant them access to vaccines. To shore up the potential risk to your personnel, consider engaging executive protection services that can mitigate and respond to threats.

CYBERSECURITY //

Foreign state actors have already tried to hack companies developing vaccines, and these cyberattacks have increased during the past few months. Now the COVID-19 vaccine supply chain is under attack by government-backed hackers. Every person and organization in the vaccine supply chain, from the manufacturers to the Vaccine Distribution Centers should be concerned about cybersecurity risks. There are many points at which vulnerabilities can occur: email phishing schemes, hacking databases and access control systems are just a few. To protect your staff and patients from these threats, you can enlist cybersecurity services like program assessments, penetration testing, breach response, Advanced Persistent Threat Detection (APT), and security awareness training.

SECURITY TECHNOLOGY //

Another way to secure your facility is with the use of cameras and access controls. These methods are even more important when handling a vaccine that could be a target for theft. If your site has existing technology, consider a site assessment to make sure your infrastructure covers the current threats. If your Vaccine Distribution Center are mobile or you'll be setting up inside a third-party site, there are mobile technologies available to assist.



ARMED AND UNARMED SECURITY SERVICES //

Your Vaccine Distribution Center security plans should include physical security officers. A physical security presence helps put your medical staff and patients at ease. There are many options available: concierge services, patrols, transportation escorts for mobile Vaccine Distribution Centers or vaccine deliveries, and Strategic Response Teams who respond to emergencies. The challenges of running a center for distributing the COVID-19 vaccine also go well beyond the larger threats from criminals and foreign actors. They include crowd control and the management of patient pre-screenings. You may want to hire Temperature Screening Officers, Mask Compliance Officers and Social Distancing Officers to supplement your COVID-19 vaccine security.

EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKS //

Many Vaccine Distribution Centers are hiring thousands of additional medical professionals to handle vaccine distribution. During times of increased employee onboarding, it is important to continue to follow company vetting procedures. These should include rigorous employee background screenings to ensure these new employees are qualified and don't introduce new threats to the process.

CONCLUSION //

As with every organization in the vaccine supply chain, a Vaccine Distribution Center should implement proactive security measures and remain vigilant during the coming months. Your organization and frontline medical professionals play a vital role in successfully ending the pandemic. The only way to do that safely is in a secure working environment. As a COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Center, precautionary measures to ensure the vaccine, your employees and your customers are safe and secure should be a priority.

We at Brosnan salute you for your important work and stand ready to assist with your security needs. Please do not hesitate to contact us to learn more about how we can support your facility.

Thank you for reading!

