

# AABB Interorganizational Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism\*

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May 19, 2006

Dear Blood Collection Facilities:

With the recent threat of pandemic influenza and another hurricane season quickly approaching, it is important to realize that the time for planning is *prior* to an event actually occurring. The AABB Interorganizational Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism (Task Force) has been working in conjunction with the federal government to help blood collection facilities and transfusion services prepare in the event of any disaster. The primary roles of the Task Force continue to be to assist affected facilities with blood needs by coordinating the movement of blood as well as to provide clear and consistent messages to the blood community, donors, and the public. However, in certain disaster-related events the assistance and intervention of state and local governments may be needed to obtain essential fuel and transportation assistance. Therefore, in order to ensure that blood needs can be met in times of disaster, the Task Force strongly recommends that blood collection facilities reach out to state and local emergency preparedness offices to see that blood is recognized as a public health priority in times of disaster.

Blood facilities should have an up-to-date disaster plan already in place. This plan should include an overall assessment of the critical infrastructure of the facility (e.g., fuel, water, electricity, and structural integrity) as well as familiarity with the *AABB Disaster Operations Handbook* (located on the AABB Web site, under “Programs and Services > Disaster Response”). Blood collection facilities should create a communications plan, which includes procedures for communicating with the Task Force. The Task Force will help communicate the local blood facility’s emergency requirements to the federal government with the goal of assisting the facility in obtaining federal assistance to ensure that blood and blood products are available where they are critically required.

In addition, blood facilities should establish relationships with their state and local preparedness agencies. It is important to know how to reach the local and state emergency operations center (EOC). If a request for assistance in obtaining fuel, transportation or communications is made to the Task Force, a similar request should also be made through the state and local EOC. This is important since the state and local governments will be responsible for providing considerable assistance in the event of a disaster and may not immediately consider blood a priority even if the federal government considers it such. In order to be most effective, blood centers should establish contacts with state and local offices well in advance of a disaster. Ideally, blood

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\*Task Force members include: AABB, America’s Blood Centers, American Red Cross, Blood Centers of America, AdvaMed, American Association of Tissue Banks, American Hospital Association, College of American Pathologists, National Marrow Donor Program and the Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association. Task Force liaisons include: Armed Services Blood Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services and the Food and Drug Administration.

collection facilities should collaborate with other collectors in their states and or localities to ensure that state and local agencies receive a consistent message. Contact information for state emergency management offices can be viewed at [www.fema.gov/about/contact/statedr.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/about/contact/statedr.shtm)

If you have questions about disaster preparedness or the activities of the Task Force, please contact Jamie Blietz at 301.215.6572 or [Jamie\\_b@aabb.org](mailto:Jamie_b@aabb.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald O. Doddridge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D".

Donald Doddridge, MA, MT(ASCP)

Chair

AABB Interorganizational Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism