Field Coordinator SOP (Boots on the Ground)

How one person coordinates the day-to-day of an infant-feeding-in-emergencies field response — deploying teams, prioritizing sites, keeping kits flowing, and making sure nothing falls through the cracks. Written so a group anywhere can run it, with notes on how the SAFE Team did it in practice.

> **New to this role?** Read the Response Overview first — it explains the whole response structure and the other coordinator roles this one works alongside. This page is the deep dive on the field-coordination job itself.

The **Field Coordinator** — the person doing the "boots on the ground" coordination, sometimes shortened to **BotG Coordinator** or **BotGC** — manages the deployment of field teams and the logistics of running a response out of a headquarters. In a small response, one person wears this hat and several others; in a larger one, it's a dedicated role with helpers. The job is the same at any scale.

GENERAL CATEGORIES OF RESPONSIBILITY

- Oversee the status of the sites you're serving, and prioritize them.
- Deploy volunteers and staff.
- Make sure individual service requests actually get resolved.
- Keep donations and kits available (unless a Kit/Supply Supervisor handles this).
- Make sure teams in the field have everything they need — and build new systems when they don't.
- Help manage informed milk-sharing donations and distribution, if you run a depot at HQ.
- Keep the other coordinators aware of what's changing in the field so the whole team can respond in time.
- Train the next Field Coordinator before you need to hand it off.

These categories are for convenience only — in practice every task is interrelated.

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1 · Responsibilities in detail

Oversee site status & prioritize sites

Track your sites (locations), the families you're following, and open needs in one shared place. A multi-tab spreadsheet works well and costs nothing — see Managing the operations spreadsheet below.

- Decide which locations need infant-feeding-specialist volunteers each day.
- Read site reports, assign each site a priority level, decide what's needed, and make sure the need gets met.
- Make sure any site requesting or needing specific support gets a follow-up and a resolution.
- Make sure daily needs, family cases, one-time events, and other logged requests are followed up by whoever is designated to do so.
- Build each day's routes from the highest-priority sites (plus any one-time events and daily tasks), and add extra sites that could use support.
- Send teams to *scout* new sites; set an initial priority, frequency, and route for each, and add it to the rotation.

- Review new data on existing sites regularly and adjust priority, frequency, and routing as things change.
- Retire sites (mark them "Closed") once they no longer need support.

How you decide *which* sites rise to the top is its own topic — see Determining Need.

Deploy volunteers & staff

The mechanics of a single deployment — pairing, safety, communication — are covered in Deploying as an Individual or Small Group. As coordinator, your job is to run it at scale, every day:

- Help run the morning meeting and orient new volunteers.
- Train new volunteers, or pair them with experienced volunteers who will.
- Remind volunteers to submit site reports, urgent needs, and potential new locations.
- Form teams of 2–3 that fit the day's routes. When you can, put a new volunteer with an experienced one.
- Encourage carpooling — it's easier for communication, safer, and saves gas.
- Make sure teammates have each other's cell numbers, and that everyone has *your* number in addition to the group chat.
- Multiple teams can serve the same site when the need justifies it.

WHEN SOMEONE MAY TRAVEL ALONE

Default to pairs. A volunteer may go solo only if one of these is true:

- It's a delivery or pickup only, *and* you know the location and the route to it are safe; or
- You're sending a local who knows the organization, *and* you know the location and route are safe; or
- You're sending an experienced volunteer you deeply trust to a site your group visits regularly and has a good relationship with.

MATCHING VOLUNTEERS TO SITES

- For any 1:1 family visit, send at least one IBCLC or lactation consultant — preferably with a local in the pair.
- At a site where many people speak another language, send at least one volunteer with

some proficiency in it; use a translation app if you must. **Sites where almost everyone speaks another language should only be visited by a team with at least one conversationally-proficient speaker.**

- Match the team to the community's dominant ethnicity when you can.
- Organizations with a strong local history should get at least one local volunteer when possible.
- Update the spreadsheet as you learn this about a site. If you're unsure who should serve a site, ask a local who knows it.

> **Safety comes first.** You decide when it's unsafe to send teams to a specific area, or at all — because of weather, damage or debris, construction, or the behavior/attitude at a specific site. See Special situations & weather.

Make sure service requests get resolved

When requests come in — through your form, or by phone/text — a Digital Coordinator usually triages them and logs anything that can't be handled on the spot into the Daily Needs, Families, or Dispatch tab. Your job is to make sure those open items get closed.

- Check the Daily Needs and Dispatch tabs **daily**, ideally in the morning, for new and still-open needs.
- Work a daily need the same day you learn of it when you can.
- Ask the person who logged it if anything is unclear.
- Not every Dispatch event needs a team — use your judgment about which to cover.
- If you can, assign a Digital Coordinator or local IBCLC to own the Families tab. These are ongoing cases with multiple follow-ups, and someone with clinical experience will manage the visits and referrals better. Ask them to flag appointments so you can plan around them; if updates go quiet, ask what they need from you — but make sure *someone* owns each follow-up.

Keep donations & kits available

If your response is busy enough, hand this to a well-organized **Kit/Supply Supervisor**. Delegate here more than anywhere else — but keep people accurate by instructing well and spot-checking. The kit itself (what goes in, what's banned, how to audit a donated kit) is fully specified in the Sanitation Kit Guide. Your coordination tasks:

- Keep enough kits on hand and ready for the next day (a good rule of thumb is more than 20 per team).
- Assemble kits as needed.
- Review incoming donated kits for compliance.
- Source more kits and materials as needed.

See Kit & supply management at HQ for how to set up the space and flow.

Make sure teams have what they need

- Answer questions from teams in the field.
- Build and roll out new support systems and documents when a gap shows up.
- Debrief teams and volunteers as needed — including helping them navigate hard situations. The emotional side of this is real; see Trauma-Informed Response.

Help manage milk-sharing (if you run a depot)

If a milk depot is located at your HQ, you'll help receive and distribute donated milk. This is the highest-liability activity a response can take on — see Milk-sharing at HQ and When Donated Milk Shows Up.

Keep coordinators informed

You are the team's eyes on the field. Surface status and changes to the other coordinators quickly, so developing situations get a timely response. Most of this happens at the daily wrap-up and evening leadership check-in (see Run of day).

Train the next Field Coordinator

Don't wait until you're leaving. As soon as you have a promising candidate, start bringing them alongside you so the role can hand off without losing a beat. Your Frequently Referenced Details sheet is the single most useful thing to hand a successor.

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2 · Frequently referenced details (fill-in template)

During a response, this is the information you reach for constantly — so keep it at your fingertips. We recommend copying this block into a **standalone quick-reference document** and adding anything else your daily operations need. This matters most when the coordinator role rotates between people.

ORGANIZATION CONTACT INFO

Who is in charge (decision-maker) & how to reach them: _______________

How the public should contact your group: _______________

Org name / website / email / phone-text: _______________

MEETINGS

Set a regular schedule and use the **same virtual meeting link for every meeting** — it removes a daily point of friction.

Coordinator meetings (days, time): _______________

Link / call-in number: _______________

Volunteer meetings (days, time) & link: _______________

LOCATIONS

Your HQ/meeting location, any storage locations, any milk depot. Include access codes here if the security level allows. *This is not for the relief sites you serve — those live in the spreadsheet.*

Location / purpose / address: _______________

Contact person & info: _______________

Access code & any access instructions: _______________

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Decision-maker & contact: _______________

Digital Coordinator(s) — schedule & contact: _______________

Field / Boots-on-the-Ground Coordinator(s) — schedule & contact: _______________

Core team & contacts: _______________

MAIN SHARED STORAGE FOLDER

Service used / top-level folder link: _______________

Key files — operations spreadsheet, volunteers sheet, inventory sheet, intake form: _______________

3 · Managing the operations spreadsheet

A single shared spreadsheet can run the whole operation — sites, families, needs, dispatch, and routes — for free.

Template: SAFE's multi-tab Operations Template (with fictional sample data) and Inventory Logistics Template are available on request — ask us and we'll share copies. *Always save your own copy before editing.*

How SAFE did it: we used a shared Google Sheet with tabs for Sites/Locations, Daily Needs, Families, Trainings & Collaborations, Dispatch, the form-response feed, and per-area Route tabs. A recorded walkthrough of the sheet is available on request.

Sites / Locations tab

- A truly new site (nobody has visited) → send a team to **Scout** it.
- After scouting, set the status to **EVAL** so the coordinator can review and assign priority, frequency, and routing. If the scout already has a sense of it, they can suggest those too.

Daily Needs, Families, Dispatch tabs

Daily Needs and Dispatch are your morning read; Families holds ongoing cases (ideally owned by a clinical lead). Dispatch (a.k.a. Daily Dispatch) is also where you park upcoming one-time and recurring events in rough date order — see Special situations.

Form responses

If your intake form feeds a tab automatically, that's your raw inbox. Decide — and **tell your volunteers** — whether you're watching it in real time.

> **How SAFE did it:** the coordinator couldn't watch live submissions while also fielding calls, rerouting teams, and managing kits — so we asked teams to contact the coordinator *directly* (DM, text, or call) for anything urgent or off-plan, and reviewed the form feed in the evening. The key is that volunteers know what to expect: if they assume you're reading every submission the moment it lands and you're not, things get missed.

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4 · Creating routes

Filtering without breaking the shared sheet

With a lot of sites, you need to thin the list down to build routes. Ordinary column filters can **corrupt data** when several people are in the sheet at once, because a filter changes what everyone sees. Two safer approaches:

Approach	Good for	Watch out for
Filter Views (per-user filters that don't change anyone else's view)	Quick, refined lists across multiple columns; you can save several and return to them.	Any edit *other than the filter itself* still changes the main data. Keep track of whether you're in a filter view or the live sheet. One at a time.
Route tabs (a separate tab per direction/area — north, south, a major town)	Simple day-to-day route building; the view is stable and repeatable.	Keep tabs in sync with the main site list as things change.

Building the day's routes for teams

- Pull the highest-priority sites, plus any one-time events from Dispatch and tasks from Daily Needs.
- Group sites geographically so each team's day flows.
- Send each team, in visiting order: teammate names; each site's priority, name, address, contact, hours; and what they should do there (or the latest notes).

> **How SAFE did it:** we marked priority with stars (more stars = higher priority; a one-star site could be skipped without checking in first), and pasted route cells through a plain-text editor before sending, because the group-chat tool only accepted plain text. Whatever tools you use, strip formatting so the list is clean on a phone.

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5 · Special situations & weather

Date-specific events

Ask your Digital Coordinators to help enter and manage these. Four patterns, each handled a little differently:

- **Weekly / bi-weekly recurring** — treat like a normal site. List it in Sites/Locations, set its Route column so it lands on the right day, and keep the Hours column current. Confirm it's open that day before routing a team.
- **One-time events** — park them in Dispatch in rough date order. When you reach that day, decide whether to send a team. Even one-offs need a site report so the visit is tracked.
- **Monthly recurring** — easiest as a one-time event, but also listed in Sites/Locations. Put the next one or two occurrences in Dispatch and keep Hours updated as reports come in.
- **Intermittent / rotating location** — list known occurrences up to about six weeks out in Dispatch. If the address always changes, list the organization without an address in Sites/Locations and keep the address in Dispatch only. Always confirm details with the org before sending a team.

Inclement & severe weather

> **Volunteer safety in the field is the top priority.** Your job is to help volunteers prepare, and to keep them home when it isn't safe. This applies to road conditions too — construction, washouts, debris.

ORDINARY ROUGH CONDITIONS (RAIN, COLD, HEAT)

With simple preparation these aren't dangerous. Remind volunteers that many distribution sites are outdoors and they may be out there all day.

- Cold: dress in layers.
- Be specific with out-of-town volunteers about what your region's conditions actually feel like.
- Remind people to advocate for their own needs and keep an eye on their teammates.

> **How SAFE did it:** "dress in warm layers, like you would for skiing or sledding" prepared people far better than "it'll be cold." Volunteers from elsewhere often underestimate southeastern heat and humidity, or how much the dry western air can affect them. Translate the forecast into what to actually wear.

SEVERE CONDITIONS (SNOW/ICE, STORMS, HIGH WIND)

- In season, check the weather at least daily and subscribe to alerts.
- Make sure every volunteer can reach your group communication tool, and post updates to the whole group.
- Watch conditions *by area* — microclimates mean one part of your region can be safe while another is dangerous. Send teams only into the safe areas.
- Be flexible: delay the start, begin virtually, or end early as conditions change.
- When in doubt, keep people off the roads.

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6 · The coordinator's run of day

A sample daily rhythm. Times are relative to your morning meeting; adjust to your team.

WEATHER CHECK — 90+ MINUTES BEFORE THE MEETING

Check the weather and any school/organization closings. Decide whether to start virtually and notify everyone through the group chat well before start time.

ARRIVAL & SETUP — 30–60+ MINUTES BEFORE

Taking an hour (more if you're drafting routes) before the meeting makes the whole day less stressful. It's often easiest to draft routes the night before.

- Set up the space.
- Review the day's volunteers: how many, experience levels, languages spoken.
- Review Daily Needs and Dispatch for anything urgent or time-sensitive.
- Assess which locations need coverage and draft routes; finalize team assignments after the meeting, once you know skills and scheduling.
- About 10 minutes out, greet volunteers: remind them to sign in, show restrooms and wifi, point to the check-in sheet, and (optionally) have them make name tags.

MORNING MEETING

Run it partly on video so latecomers catch the essentials. A founder or local coordinator often leads; the Field Coordinator covers:

- Expectations for the day.
- Safety and self-care — eating, drinking, bathroom breaks, and emotional self-care.
- Motivation, and a reminder to sign in and out at every site.
- Any team-specific instructions, handled 1:1.
- With a small group, quick introductions: name, any relevant skills, what drew them to volunteer.

AFTER THE VIDEO PORTION — IN PERSON

- Share a couple of wins and challenges from yesterday, for motivation.
- For newer volunteers, cover one to three stress-management tools and the basics of trauma-informed, emotionally supportive interaction. (See Trauma-Informed Response.)
- Find out who speaks other languages, and their experience and credentials.
- Have experienced volunteers give a quick Rapid Needs Assessment refresher to new

folks.

FIELD TEAMS GATHER RESOURCES

Each deploying team collects what it needs — name tags and a marker, handouts and resource info, your organization's contact cards, the RNA intake form, your regional lactation directory, safe-formula-storage sheets, DIY kit sheets, extra handout booklets, a language phrase sheet if needed, and the right number of kits.

> **How SAFE did it:** teams also carried cards and flyers for a regional 24/7 breastfeeding hotline (the Appalachian Breastfeeding Network) to leave at each site, and a printed WNC lactation-support directory. Swap in your own hotline and directory.

DEPLOY

- Send teams in pairs or more (see the solo exceptions above).
- Route them from HQ with a mapping app.
- Make sure teammates trade cell numbers even when riding together.
- Confirm every volunteer can reach you by both call/text and the group chat. A quick "hello" from each new volunteer confirms the channel works.
- Have one person per team report how many kits they're taking.

> **How SAFE did it:** we sent each team its route two ways depending on the day — a one-time plain-text message (fast, but can't be updated) or a shared doc link (updatable through the day, easier to read). GroupMe only accepted plain text, so route cells were pasted through a plain-text editor first.

WHILE TEAMS ARE OUT

First, take a short breather — regroup, eat if you haven't, and look at the day's priorities. Then work through:

- **Kit management** — check inventory, assemble kits, review incoming donated kits, source more supplies.
- Answer field questions.
- Evaluate new sites, reassess priorities, and look ahead for upcoming events.

- Draft tomorrow's routes.
- Contact sites for information (often hand this to the day's Digital Coordinator).
- Improve systems — forms, docs, this SOP — as time allows.
- Receive or distribute milk, if you're doing milk-sharing.
- Retire sites that no longer need support.
- Train your successor.

WRAP-UP & DEBRIEF

Talk with any team that returns to HQ. Debriefing helps volunteers process their day *and* keeps you in touch with the field — people tell far more out loud than they write in a site report, and with many teams the written reports can lag a day behind.

> **The stories volunteers tell you at debrief are priceless.** They're how you piece together what's really happening — recovery trends, which sites reach the most people, what qualities a site needs from a volunteer. A few prompts: How did the day go? Anything you want to share? Any wins or challenges? Any connection we should follow up on?

EVENING LEADERSHIP CHECK-IN

Bring the day's picture to the other coordinators. Expect the cadence to shrink as the response matures — daily at first, then a few times a week, then a weekly all-hands with just the coordinators checking in daily.

Things worth raising: a summary of the day; supply needs you can't resolve alone or that are spiking; systems that aren't flowing and ideas to fix them; questions; which surplus donations should go into kits; potential partnerships; and anything unusual.

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7 · Deployment quick reference

A printable morning checklist — the run of day boiled down.

AS VOLUNTEERS ARRIVE

- Greet everyone; remind them to check in.
- Show restrooms and wifi; name tags.

VIRTUAL MEETING

- Cover the essentials (see run of day); quick introductions.

AFTER THE VIDEO

- Wins and challenges from yesterday.
- A stress-management tool or two.
- Hand out per-person resources: name tags, contact cards, hotline cards/flyers, the RNA intake form, your regional lactation directory, safe-formula-storage sheet.
- Identify language proficiencies and hand out a phrase sheet if needed.
- Identify new volunteers; have an experienced volunteer or staffer explain the RNA (do it for the whole group only if several are new).
- Explain temperature-control and keeping-babies-warm issues as needed.
- Flag any scheduling constraints.

WHILE YOU FINALIZE ROUTES, HAVE VOLUNTEERS HELP

- Experienced volunteers train new ones on the basics.
- Fold and staple booklets; pack cups; pack kits.
- Check incoming kits and supplies — *only* if the person knows exactly what your group has approved.
- Call sites to check hours and upcoming events (best done by experienced volunteers).
- Gather each team's kits.

HANDOUTS TO DISTRIBUTE AS A RESPONSE WINDS DOWN

As you begin to hand a site off, make sure it can carry on without you. Give distribution sites and shelters their exit/support posters, and give them plenty of the family-facing resources to hand out. Details and print-ready files live on the audience pages:

Resources for Distribution Sites · Shelter & Congregate Area Resources · Resources

for Families & Caregivers

8 · Kit & supply management at HQ

The *contents* of a sanitation kit — the bill of materials, what's banned, how to audit a donated kit — are fully specified in the Sanitation Kit Guide. What follows is the coordinator's piece: setting up the HQ so supplies flow.

Set up your space

Designate an area for each function below. They can be separate rooms, or one room divided by tables, signs, or tape.

- **Intake** — where *all* incoming supplies land until someone can process them. Inspect kit supplies and donated complete kits here; bring donated kits up to standard by adding handouts, labels, and any missing components.
- **Kit-supply storage** — components not currently in use.
- **Completed kits** — only properly finished kits go here; teams take what they need without oversight. Track kits in and out for planning (an inventory template is available on request).
- **Volunteer field supplies** — an organized, easy-access stash of what volunteers grab: name tags, markers, contact cards, and copies of every handout. Keep extras.
- **Office supplies** — pens, paper, toner, tape, scissors, sticky notes, printer.
- **Clinical & other supplies** — pumps, carriers, clinical items, labeled and organized if you distribute them.
- **Outflow** — items not useful to you that should go to another organization.
- **Kit assembly** — easiest assembly-line style; can be set up on demand unless you're building kits nearly every day.

> **How SAFE did it:** a few folding tables (rectangular worked best for folding, stapling, and assembly), a couple of folding chairs so essential staff could sit, and a folding wagon (or a few medium boxes / box-bottom bags) to move 4–6 kits at a time to cars.

> We started with donated bins and bought shelving about three weeks in.

Ordering supplies

Before buying or printing anything, get clear on your group's rules: do you purchase and get reimbursed, or does someone else order? What needs approval, and what doesn't? Who handles reimbursement, what do they need, and by when?

> **How SAFE sourced kit basics:** a dollar store was cheapest for bleach, bottle brushes, and dish soap (store pickup avoids shipping; allow ~3 weeks). A business account at a major online retailer covered quick turnarounds. A big-box retailer had the best price on the bins we liked (a sturdy 6-qt shoebox size). Substitute your own local equivalents.

Disposal

Expired formula and baby food can go to the landfill (there's usually a fee). Don't use your host site's dumpster without asking first and confirming how much they're okay with.

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9 · Milk-sharing at HQ

If you run an informed milk-sharing depot, the coordinator helps receive, log, and distribute donated human milk, and keeps temperature and donor/recipient records. This is the single highest-liability thing a response can do, and the rules vary by state.

> **Do not improvise this.** Read When Donated Milk Shows Up and SAFE's position on donations in emergencies before accepting any milk. SAFE's consent and disclosure packet, printable donor/recipient log, and temperature log are available on request. Donor-facing paperwork should be the single-page consent PDF only — never the full internal file.

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10 · Producing handouts & labels (how SAFE did it)

You'll be printing a lot — handout booklets for kits, branding labels for the sides of bins, and bleach-instruction labels for the tops. The exact steps depend entirely on your printer, so treat this as an example rather than a recipe.

> **How SAFE did it:**
>
> - **General tips:** check the loaded paper before printing; print one copy before a big batch; when toner looks patchy, redistribute it by gently rocking the cartridge before replacing it; print smaller batches when toner is low.
> - **Booklets:** we printed our bilingual visual handout as a double-sided legal-size booklet in batches of ~20, un-collated (faster on our printer), then hand-collated and stapled at the center fold with a long-reach stapler. We kept a separate PC and Mac version of the print file because the page orientation differed.
> - **Side labels:** branding stickers printed 6-up on shipping-label sheets from the bypass tray, one test sheet first.
> - **Top labels:** bleach-instruction labels printed 25 at a time on a dedicated label printer (a Brother P-touch) from a saved template.
>
> Your files, printer, and label maker will differ — the point is to standardize *your* settings and write them down so anyone can reproduce a batch.

Companion pages

This SOP is the coordinator's spine. The pages below hold the full detail for each piece it touches:

When you need...	Go to
The whole response structure & the other roles	Response Overview
How to prioritize sites & scale your response	Determining Need

The mechanics of a single deployment	Deploying as an Individual or Small Group
Assessing needs on the ground	Rapid Needs Assessment
Calling & scouting distribution sites (scripts)	Contacting Sites
What goes in a kit & auditing donated kits	Sanitation Kit Guide
How much formula to stock	How Much Formula to Stock
Donated human milk at HQ	When Donated Milk Shows Up
Debrief, self-care & trauma-informed support	Trauma-Informed Response
Building your own resource directory	Creating a Resource List
Training volunteers & site staff	Nourishing Resilience — Session 8
Managing an on-the-ground response (training)	Nourishing Resilience — Session 9

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