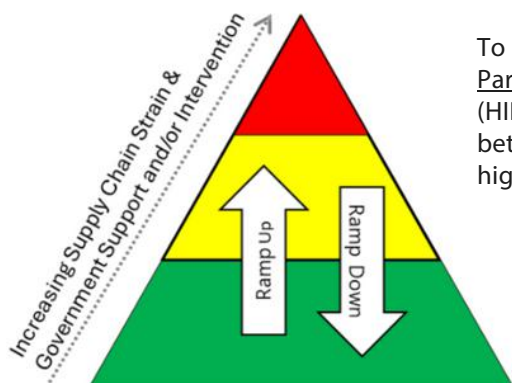




Resilience & Preparedness Summit

Tabletop Exercise: After-Action Report



To build a more resilient medical supply chain, the 2023 [Traffic Protocol Partnership](#) published by the Health Industry Distributors Association (HIDA) established a framework to enhance coordination and collaboration between industry leaders and governmental partners. This protocol highlights three phases of supply chain health:

Green: Normal or Standard Operations

Yellow: Strained Operations

Red: Critical Conditions that Severely Disrupt Operations

Additionally, HIDA developed a [Communications Plan](#) to support the Traffic Protocol, identifying the appropriate audience for messaging during each phase, the public and private partners that should coordinate messaging, and the cadence for that coordination. These publications are intended as “living documents,” with successive iterations informed by partner feedback from real-world application of the protocol and training exercises.

On June 13, 2025, approximately 80 health industry distribution and manufacturing leaders, federal partners, and nonprofit leaders gathered at HIDA's Resilience & Preparedness Summit in Washington, D.C.

The summit concluded with a tabletop exercise of the Traffic Protocol and associated Communications Plan.

Tabletop Exercise Overview

The tabletop exercise was conducted in a no-fault learning environment over the course of one hour. Participants were separated into small groups with a mix of healthcare distributors, manufacturers, and federal partners at each table. Each table was supported by a HIDA staff member facilitating discussion and taking notes. The objective of the tabletop exercise was to identify the conditions or situation(s) that shift the medical supply chain up or down the Traffic Protocol phases. Noting that the “yellow” phase is the least well-defined, the exercise focused on situations that ramp up from green to yellow and down from red to yellow. The working definitions for the exercise were:

- Green:** Less than 7 days of product on allocation, no service disruptions of elective procedures or surgeries
- Yellow:** 21 or more days of product allocation, limited disruption of elective procedures or surgeries
- Red:** Large scale supply chain disruptions with the federal government assuming a coordination and leadership role to mitigate risk

The tabletop scenario was a combination of severe weather impacting East Coast ports and a cybersecurity attack impacting West Coast ports over the course of one week in July 2025. Participants were provided a series of situation updates and were asked to identify what Traffic Protocol color the supply chain was at that stage. Below is a timeline of the scenario posed to participants and associated survey results of the Traffic Protocol status:




July 6:

The National Weather Service predicts severe thunderstorms across South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida with the potential of evolving into a derecho (severe thunderstorm with sustained hurricane force winds). Seaports in Savannah, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; and Jacksonville, Florida may be impacted by the storms.

 **Green: 48%**
 **Yellow: 52%**
 **Red: 0%**




July 7:

The Port of Long Beach reports that its vessel traffic service has been impacted by a cyberattack. All port operations are halted for a minimum of 24 hours while authorities work to identify the size and scale of the attack and institute a backup system.

 **Green: 15%**
 **Yellow: 70%**
 **Red: 15%**

July 8:

The Port of Long Beach determines that it will take at least 7 days to return to normal operations and warns that trucking and rail companies may have been compromised in the cyberattack. Additionally, federal officials determine that the cyberattack was initiated by a foreign government and in response raises reciprocal tariffs levied against several countries with significant healthcare product manufacturing presence.

 **Green: 5%**
 **Yellow: 47.5%**
 **Red: 47.5%**




July 9:

The predicted East Coast storms evolve into a derecho, disrupting operations at the Port of Charleston and Port of Savannah. Surveying the storm damage, Charleston estimates that it will be operating at 50% capacity for at least one week and Savannah estimates that it will be operating at 25% capacity for at least two weeks.

 **Green: 0%**
 **Yellow: 57%**
 **Red: 33%**

July 10:

Officials at the Port of Long Beach were able to restore operations faster than anticipated and confirm that rail and trucking operations were not impacted. Normal operations at the Port of Long Beach will resume on July 11, although the ports of Savannah and Charleston continue operating at reduced capacity as they recover from the storms.

 **Green: 28%**
 **Yellow: 67%**
 **Red: 6%**

Conclusion:

At the conclusion of the exercise, participants were asked whether they agreed with the proposed definitions of “green” and “yellow.”

A majority of participants (74%) agreed with the definition of “green” while a supermajority (89%) disagreed with the definition of “yellow.”

Tabletop Exercise Assessment

The tabletop exercise generated significant conversation among the participants, identifying several strengths to the existing protocol and communications guide as well as ways to improve the resource for future applications.

Major Strengths

HIDA and its members maintain strong connections with federal partners, with several examples of past coordination to mitigate disruptions to the healthcare supply chain created by natural disasters or other incidents. The current protocol and communications plan provides a clear framework for continued collaboration and response.

Primary Areas Of Improvement: *Updated Traffic Protocol Definitions*

Throughout the exercise, participants noted that the working definitions for “green” and “yellow” were unclear because they are measured by the number of days of product on allocation. This is not a standard definition of “allocation,” which is the process to distribute a fair proportion of available supplies in a way that preserves inventory for customers for as long as possible and prevents hoarding. When applying the definitions to the scenario, some participants talked about days of product remaining in inventory or days inventory on hand to discuss challenges along the supply chain. While days inventory on hand may be a better understood term, the baseline of what is sufficient inventory on hand varies greatly by product type and scenario. Instead, there was a suggestion of revising the color definitions to be more general:

- **Green:** steady state
- **Yellow:** requires a strategy change
- **Red:** severe disruptions leading to an inability to fulfill orders

Segment Supply Chain Impact

Although the three-color protocol provides a framework to assess the healthcare supply chain, assigning a single color for the status obfuscated nuance within the supply chain status based on geography, product type, and logistics. For example, businesses have different impact considerations if their inbound logistics (e.g., shipping and ports) are limited than outbound logistics (e.g., delivery trucks and sales organization). Constraints on either set of logistics may result in a “yellow” level of concern for the supply chain, but does not provide much information on the proper mitigating steps and partners. One suggestion is to identify segments within the supply chain to assign traffic light protocol colors to and provide a dashboard of the overall supply chain status. Three potential segments are:

- **Demand:** Spike in demand for medical products spurred by a disease outbreak or other incident.
- **Manufacturing:** Failure of a significant manufacturing plant limiting the supply of a certain medical product.
- **Logistics:** Challenges in shipping, freight, or other modes of transportation.
 - Consider impacts on manufacturing and distribution facilities

Next Steps

HIDA is committed to supporting the collaboration between healthcare industry distributors and manufacturers and our federal partners. Based on the feedback of the exercise, the next step is to finalize *Traffic Protocol* definitions to better align with industry understanding of the status of the supply chain. Industry leaders and federal partners should convene and discuss proposed new definitions and update the *Traffic Protocol* and *Communications Plan* accordingly.

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