

Chapter 3: Emergency Plans



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3.1 Scope

3.1.1 This chapter describes the principle objectives in formulating arrangements to deal with an emergency at a nuclear site, and provides guidance on the content and features of the emergency plans needed to facilitate a co-ordinated multi agency response. In considering the guidance, planners will also need to take account of the requirements of REPPiR for the off-site emergency plan, which are set out in Schedule 7 to the Regulations, and also the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004, noting that REPPiR takes precedence. This chapter does not replace or change in any way the requirements under REPPiR or CCA.

3.2 General

3.2.1 Detailed plans would normally be prepared for an area, or zone, around each site to provide an effective response primarily for the protection of the public from any nuclear accident which could be reasonably foreseen (see paragraph 3.3.1). This area is determined by technical studies assessing the accident scenarios given the design of the plant and its operating procedures. Beyond the detailed emergency planning zone, general contingency plans should provide a framework for dealing with more serious, but even less likely accidents. The arrangements for dealing with such a response are described in Chapter 9 on the Extendibility of plans.

3.2.2 Specific aspects of emergency plans, particularly the detailed plans, are described in the following chapters setting out requirements of strategic co-ordinating centres, countermeasures and media briefing centres; this chapter concentrates on the more general aspects which should apply.

3.3 Objectives

3.3.1 The principal objectives in formulating arrangements into a plan providing effective action at all stages of a nuclear emergency are to:

- (a) quickly alert emergency responders;
- (b) bring the nuclear emergency under control and bring the site to a safe condition;
- (c) ensure that those who are involved in dealing with the nuclear emergency at the site are not put to unnecessary risk and, in particular, to ensure that they are not exposed to unnecessary radiation doses;

- (d) introduce countermeasures where and as appropriate to minimise the risk to those outside the site, in particular members of the public;
- (e) ensure that all relevant organisations/agencies are linked and working to authoritatively based information;
- (f) ensure that Government, the media, the public and the wider community are effectively and accurately informed at all times; and
- (g) ensure that the arrangements reflect the possibility that an extended response may be necessary.

3.4 Features of Emergency Plans

- 3.4.1 Emergency plans need to be drawn up in advance in order to provide an effective response to a nuclear emergency at a nuclear site which leads, or could lead, to a release of radioactive material that would affect people off-site. These plans should provide for rapid and effective action for accidents that can reasonably be foreseen and be capable of being extended should less likely and potentially more serious accidents occur.
- 3.4.2 When conditions and practices change, the implications must be analysed, risks reviewed and emergency plans adapted as appropriate and in consultation with stakeholders.
- 3.4.3 The detailed response off-site needs to co-ordinate the individual planned response by the emergency services and the site operator, initiated immediately following the declaration of an emergency. Whilst local emergency services will be at the Strategic Co-ordination Centre quickly, the response of other agencies may take longer.
- 3.4.4 The strength of emergency plans lies in their easy application and universal acceptance. Fundamental changes to plans should be avoided in an emergency so as to maintain levels of confidence both of those deployed in response to the emergency and, more especially, the local community. It can also be helpful in increasing the confidence of the local emergency services, if nuclear emergency plans do not differ in principle from plans developed for other kinds of emergency.
- 3.4.5 Plans should have in them criteria for declaring and for standing down the emergency.
- 3.4.6 Plans must take account of local surroundings and circumstances as there are fundamental differences between nuclear sites.
- 3.4.7 Local Authorities should ensure that the site and its associated risks are reflected in the Community Risk Register (CRR), as the first step to

integrating emergency planning with the activities of the local emergency planning community.

- 3.4.8 Plans must be flexible so that the benefits of particular countermeasures can be balanced against their harm.
- 3.4.9 Planning and capabilities for evacuation and shelter must be both tailored and proportionate to the risks faced by a community, as identified in the local Community Risk Register (CRR) or regional/Wales Risk Assessment. A proportionate and scalable risk-based approach includes developing emergency plans for both evacuation and supporting people sheltering in homes and workplaces during an off-site emergency.
- 3.4.10 Any emergency occurring in the United Kingdom is likely to involve a diverse community with different needs based upon a wide range of factors. Local responders will be best placed to identify the needs of those affected taking into account cultural factors, such as language, faith and belief, and other needs. Some sections of the faith communities already have established emergency plans, and it is important that as far as possible, their specific requirements are integrated into the contingency planning infrastructure and arrangements.
- 3.4.11 The conveyance to the public of messages about any emergency, whether they are advice or instructions about protective action or issues of public safety, or messages of re-assurance, will largely be achieved through the media. Plans need to recognise this and make provision for briefing and dealing with the requirements of media representatives (Chapters 13 and 14 refer).
- 3.4.12 The UK Resilience website – and other sites – can be a central source of information for the press and broadcasters inside and outside the United Kingdom, including press releases, briefings, statistics, response figures, maps, graphics and instructions. It can also be used to distribute emergency plans and transmit alerts and warnings.
- 3.4.13 It is essential that there should be personal contact between the organisations charged with formulating advice and those taking action to ensure that authoritative advice is given and understood. Plans should facilitate this wherever possible.

3.5 **Conclusion**

- 3.5.1 The preparation of sound and robust emergency plans is essential to ensure an effective response in the event of an emergency at a nuclear site. Emergency plans should be subject to regular review and update in

the light of experience and exercises, and taking account of all appropriate guidance.