



# Responding to Emergencies

Draft Guidance on response to and recovery from emergencies:  
the proposed replacement for 'Dealing with Disaster'

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Summary

- This volume of guidance, together with the accompanying *Preparing for Emergencies*, sets out the generic framework for civil protection (paragraph 1.1).
- This volume deals with post-emergency elements of Integrated Emergency Management – Response and Recovery (paragraph 1.2).
- The principles in this volume can be adapted to local conditions; this is not intended to be an operations manual (paragraph 1.3).
- This volume is designed primarily for all staff of responder organisations, in particular senior officers and managers (paragraph 1.4).
- The operational models included in this volume apply in England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are covered in later chapters (paragraph 1.4).
- This chapter includes the definitions of emergency that underpin the guidance (paragraph 1.5).

### Purpose

**1.1** Integrated emergency management comprises six related activities – anticipation, assessment, prevention, preparation, response, and recovery. *Preparing for Emergencies* covers the first four activities. The purpose of *Responding to Emergencies* is to give guidance and advice on response and recovery in order to support those organisations and individuals that have roles to play in emergencies, and especially those entities subject to duties under the Act.

**1.2** Response encompasses the actions taken to deal with the first effects of an emergency. In many scenarios, it is likely to be relatively short and to last for hours or days. In contrast, recovery may take months and years to complete, as it seeks to redress the enduring consequences of disaster, such as environmental and psychological impacts. Despite the difference, the two processes are inextricably linked by the common purpose of restoring normality, and from the outset should proceed simultaneously as parts of a coherent whole.

**1.3** This volume offers guidance founded on basic principles suitable for adaptation to local conditions when incorporated into local arrangements. It is not intended to be prescriptive nor an operations manual. It aims to establish good practice based on lessons learned from planning for and dealing with emergencies during recent years both in the UK and internationally. Similarly there is no single organisational arrangement that will be appropriate to each and every type of emergency. Nor will a single planning blueprint meet every need. The key to effective arrangements is to apply sound principles founded on experience to the problems in hand.

### Scope and definitions

**1.4** This volume relies on *Preparing for Emergencies* and has been edited so as to minimise unnecessary duplication. Nevertheless, it can be used as a stand-alone briefing document at the time of an incident and for training purposes, dealing specifically with response and recovery issues. Whereas *Preparing for Emergencies* is aimed principally at civil protection professionals involved in emergency preparedness,

this volume is likely to be useful to all staff of responder organisations, in particular senior officers and managers who may be called to respond to an emergency. It describes what they are likely to encounter at the scene of a localised emergency and in widespread emergencies, including the roles of partner agencies and the principles of control and co-ordination that are likely to be followed in tackling the emergency. The operational models it describes are those that apply in England. Variations that apply in the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are mentioned in the text and covered in detail in Chapters 9, 10 and 11.

**1.5** The guidance and advice contained in this volume is principally applicable to emergencies as defined in the Act, but also across a wider spectrum of incidents which merit a multi-agency response. An emergency is an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare, the environment or security in the UK.<sup>1</sup> The terms ‘disaster’, ‘crisis’ and ‘major incident’ are commonly used by professionals and volunteers involved in civil protection to refer to different types of emergency. The Act does not use these terms, nor differentiate between them. Within the emergency services the term ‘major incident’ is preferred, because there are specific events or circumstances that will initiate a response under the framework of an emergency service’s Major Incident Plan. The definition of ‘major incident’ agreed between the Association of Chief Police Officers England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Chief Fire Officers Association is “any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services or the local authority”. Similarly the NHS definition involves “special arrangements by hospitals, ambulance services or health authorities”. These definitions match a key section of the Act which requires a responder organisation to perform its civil protection duties in preparing for an emergency only if the emergency would be likely seriously to obstruct the performance of its functions, or the organisation is likely to consider it necessary or desirable to deal with the emergency and would be unable to do so without changing the deployment of its resources or acquiring additional resources.<sup>2</sup> The common themes are the scale of the impact of the event; the demands

it is likely to make on the responder organisation; and the exceptional resources applied. In addition, there is generally a need for a multi-agency response. The term ‘emergency’ is used generically throughout this volume to encompass all disruptive occurrences that require the use of assets beyond the scope of normal operations. Such emergencies are also likely to rely on multi-agency procedures.

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<sup>2</sup> s2(2)

# Chapter 2

## Principles of effective response and recovery

### Summary

This chapter outlines the eight guiding principles for emergency response, as follows:

- **Direction** – Clarity of purpose is delivered through a strategic aim and supporting objectives that are agreed and understood by all involved to prioritise and focus the response (paragraphs 2.1–2.4).
- **Integration** – Effective co-ordination exists between and within organisations and tiers of response as well as timely access to appropriate guidance and support (paragraphs 2.5–2.8).
- **Subsidiarity** – Co-ordination occurs at the lowest appropriate level; local responders are the building blocks of response on any scale (paragraphs 2.9–2.10).
- **Preparedness** – All individuals and organisations that might have to respond to emergencies are prepared and clear about roles and responsibilities (paragraph 2.11).
- **Continuity** – Response to emergencies is grounded in the existing functions of organisations and in familiar ways of working, though delivered at a greater tempo, on a larger scale and in more testing circumstances (paragraphs 2.12–2.13).
- **Communication** – Good two-way communication is critical to effective response. Reliable information is passed correctly and without delay between those who need to know, including the public (paragraphs 2.14–2.16).
- **Co-operation** – There is positive engagement based on mutual trust and understanding to facilitate information sharing and deliver effective solutions to issues as they arise (paragraphs 2.17–2.18).
- **Anticipation** – There is ongoing risk identification, analysis and mitigation so that potential direct and indirect developments are anticipated and managed flexibly (paragraphs 2.19–2.22).

## Direction

**2.1** When an emergency occurs those responsible for managing the response face an array of conflicting demands and pressures. These will vary according to the events that caused the emergency, the speed of its onset and many other factors. The information available will often be incomplete, and perceptions of events will differ between levels and between agencies. Many agencies may be involved, and each has specific responsibilities and capabilities that require direction and co-ordination. Amidst these pressures it is essential to establish a clear, unambiguous aim that leads to the desired end. A single aim will ensure coherent actions and consistent priorities between and within the responding agencies, and concentrate effort and available resources on the task in hand. The determination of that aim, its promulgation and its maintenance are fundamental to subsequent success.

**2.2** In sudden impact emergencies (such as explosions and major transport accidents) the responding organisations will strive, as immediate objectives, to save and protect life, relieve suffering, protect property and contain the emergency. In most cases, however, this immediate phase is relatively short – it may be effectively a matter of hours – and a wider range of objectives will become apparent. In all cases, plans and actions in response and recovery should focus upon managing the consequences rather than the causes of the emergency, whilst also being robust to the full array of possible causes. Those essential qualities of focus and robustness are products of a clear aim, which in turn generates operational coherence.

**2.3** The identification and establishment of the aim most suitable for a given planning context can proceed during the preparation phase as an integral part of the planning process. The strategic body that is responsible for the execution of the plan should endorse the aim before detailed planning proceeds. Provided always that the plan is generic and robust, it will be easier to modify the aim to suit the circumstances than to start afresh amidst the extreme pressures of an emergency. Conversely it is essential not to cling to a pre-planned aim that changing circumstances have rendered obsolete.

**2.4** The strategic aim provides the focus for the application of means towards the required end.

Without this focus there is a risk that pressure from external forces such as the media, interest groups and vocal individuals could lead to the diversion of resources towards secondary activities, with adverse consequences for the overall outcome.

## Integration

**2.5** Operational success rests upon all actions being consistent with the aim, coherent, predictable, and in accordance with the intent of the originator of the direction. This condition is achieved through integration of effort as a result of effective co-ordination.

**2.6** Emergencies may demand the participation of multiple services, agencies, authorities and central government departments. In extreme cases as many as 30 organisations could be engaged during response and recovery, each with its own objectives, duties and tasks. The figure is unlikely to be less than 10 in an emergency, and in any event will vary during the course of operations. Similarly their priority and relative prominence will change between phases.

**2.7** A proportion of emergencies will affect large areas: some may have national extent, and a few could have truly international dimensions, most notably maritime pollution and atmospheric radiological dispersion such as that experienced after Chernobyl. Within the UK an emergency may encompass part of England and one or more of the devolved administrations of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, with attendant differences in emergency arrangements between them. In these and all other cases co-ordination is essential, and to be effective is best delivered at the highest necessary level, which is normally above direct operational engagement.

**2.8** Emergencies present challenging command and control problems, most especially in communication and co-ordination, both within and between organisations, as well as with other tiers of response (eg central government and regional bodies). Their resolution requires clearly defined structures within which the key agencies can: combine and act as a single authoritative focus; consult, agree and decide; and issue instructions, policies and guidance to which all entities will conform. These structures and the associated procedures are embedded through training and regularly tested in exercises.

## Subsidiarity

**2.9** The UK's civil protection doctrine is founded on a 'bottom-up' approach, in which control of operations is exercised at the lowest practical level. In all cases the local responder is the basic building block of the response to an emergency. This approach is proven to be robust in face of the difficulties with higher-level communications and situational awareness that often arise in emergencies.

**2.10** The role of the higher levels is to support and reinforce the efforts of the lower through the provision of resources and co-ordination where necessary, as described above. Thus the sub-principles of '**lowest practical**' for control and '**highest necessary**' for co-ordination are consistent and mutually reinforcing.

## Preparedness

**2.11** All those individuals and organisations that might have to respond to an emergency should be prepared to do so and understand their role and responsibilities. Detailed guidance on preparedness is contained in *Preparing for Emergencies* and on roles and responsibilities in Chapter 3 below.

## Continuity

**2.12** Effective response is most likely to be found in tried and tested arrangements built on everyday working practices. In an emergency, familiarity and simplicity have virtues all of their own. Only robust organisations and processes will be able to survive the demands of emergencies. Only simple plans offer the flexibility to adapt to changed circumstances.

**2.13** Wherever possible response arrangements should preserve established structures and ways of doing business that people know well. If changes are necessary in the transition to emergency mode, then they must be embedded through training and practice.

## Communication

**2.14** Accurate, timely, two-way flow of information is always at a premium in emergencies owing to the adversity of the operational circumstances. Perspectives and procedures differ; mistakes occur under pressure; and communications are overloaded.

There will be pressure to wait for information to improve and situations to clarify in order better to inform decisions, but this may be at the penalty of lost opportunities and wasted effort in rapidly changing circumstances. The correct approach is to establish systematic information management processes in the multi-agency command arrangements during preparation, and to embed them through rigorous training.

**2.15** In establishing such processes it is essential to observe the following factors:

- a) Terms, definitions and meanings should, wherever possible, come from national standards and publications rather than local initiative and invention. Otherwise there is a risk that parochial usage may interfere with interoperability and co-operation with local partners or neighbours, and further confuse co-ordination at the regional and national levels. The same applies to concepts of operation, doctrine and structures.
- b) The processes should be complete, in that they must cover the entire information cycle: needs identification, tasking, acquisition, recording, collation, analysis, presentation, decision, promulgation, archiving and retrieval. An unbalanced concentration of effort or technology in one or more areas may improve part of the system, but diminish the performance of the whole.
- c) The skills and drills of information management require embedding through training and practice.
- d) The recording and preservation of information by every participating agency are fundamental to the conduct of the various investigations and inquiries that usually follow an emergency, and are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**2.16** Any emergency will result in widespread public and media interest and concern. Large numbers of requests for information can overwhelm an organisation and its normal public relations function. Plans should therefore be prepared setting out how best to ensure that the public is regularly informed of essential facts throughout the emergency, including action being taken and appropriate telephone numbers.

## Co-operation

**2.17** The management of emergencies involves many people working in large multi-agency groups which

are not bound by hierarchical relationships. The decision-making processes are discursive and wide-ranging. In such circumstances, an open and positive approach that is focused on delivering the agreed aim is essential to a successful outcome. This in turn is facilitated and encouraged by mutual trust and understanding.

**2.18** In those conditions the confidentiality of debate and decision is essential to effective operation. In its absence, the vital component of mutual trust and confidence will not prevail. Unauthorised disclosure will not only prejudice this cohesion, but also bring unwelcome pressure to bear on other operational components and divert management attention from the vital actions under way. All participants must be in no doubt as to their obligations in this area.

## Anticipation

**2.19** In any emergency it is vital for those managing the emergency to move from a reactive to a proactive stance by regaining the initiative and control as soon as possible. This requires anticipation of the course of events and future requirements flowing from the endorsed aim of operations. Without such anticipation, leadership and control will remain in crisis mode, with increasingly adverse effects on both decisions and operational outcomes.

**2.20** An important aspect of anticipation is the integration of the planning for response and recovery, which will ensure coherence and allow the earliest possible start to recovery actions. Ideally the two activities should run in parallel from the outset, although in some cases the demands on individual and collective capacity for urgent life-saving response may lead to some separation in the early stages.

**2.21** All emergencies have disparate direct and indirect impacts that may not be immediately apparent amidst the pressure of urgent response. Two merit particular consideration during planning:

a) Risk becomes dynamic. New risks emerge (possibly the risk of a further emergency), some established risks recede, and the balance between risks changes continuously. Active risk assessment and management should be continuous, but they should work to enable rather than obstruct operations by providing analysis of and solutions to anticipated problems before they arise.

b) Emergencies create business continuity challenges because they divert resources, effort and management attention. The potential impact on statutory activities is self-evident. Less immediately obvious is the danger of management and leadership discontinuity during prolonged periods of stress. The successful elimination of this danger depends on good organisation, planning and thorough training and preparation of deputies and second teams at every level.

**2.2** The organisational and operational response to an emergency needs the flexibility to adapt to circumstances at the time, but will be governed by the same eight guiding principles that underpin the response at any level (local, regional or central).

# Chapter 3

## Responding agencies

### Summary

- This chapter describe the characteristics and functions of the major agencies that are most likely to become engaged in response to and recovery from the consequences of an emergency.
- It includes information on:
  - the emergency services (paragraphs 3.2–3.9);
  - the National Health Service (paragraphs 3.10–3.17);
  - HM Coroner (paragraphs 3.18–3.20);
  - the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (paragraphs 3.21–3.24);
  - local authorities (paragraphs 3.25–3.30);
  - the Environment Agency (paragraph 3.31);
  - the private sector (paragraphs 3.32–3.35);
  - the voluntary sector (paragraph 3.36); and
  - the armed services and the regulations governing their employment in civil emergencies (paragraphs 3.37–3.42).

## Introduction

**3.1** The purpose of this chapter is to describe the characteristics and functions of the major agencies that are most likely to become engaged in response to, and recovery from, the consequences of an emergency arising with little or no warning. Schedule 1 to the Act identifies and categorises those key responders. The chapter also covers the armed services, which are not nominated responders under the Act but may play a significant role in such circumstances.

## The police service

**3.2** The police will normally co-ordinate all the activities of those responding at and around the scene of a land-based sudden-impact emergency. The saving and protection of life is the priority, but as far as possible the scene must be preserved to provide evidence for subsequent enquiries and possibly criminal proceedings. Once life saving is complete, the area will be preserved as a scene of crime until it is established as otherwise (unless the emergency results from severe weather or other natural phenomena and no element of human culpability is involved). Where practicable the police, in consultation with other emergency services and specialists, establish and maintain cordons at appropriate distances. Cordons are established to facilitate the work of the other emergency services and support organisations in the saving of life, the protection of the public and the care of survivors.

**3.3** Where terrorist action is suspected as the cause of an incident, the police will normally take additional measures to protect the scene. These include establishing cordons under the Terrorism Act 2000 and carrying out searches for secondary devices. They also take initial responsibility for safety management for those working within cordons at such incidents.

**3.4** The police oversee any criminal investigation. Where a criminal act is suspected they must undertake the collection of evidence, with due labelling, sealing, storage and recording. They facilitate inquiries carried out by the responsible accident investigation bodies, such as the Health and Safety Executive, or the Air or Marine Accident Investigation Branch.

**3.5** The police process casualty information and have responsibility for identifying and arranging for the removal of the dead. In this task they act on behalf of HM Coroner who has the legal responsibility for investigating the cause and circumstances of any deaths involved.

**3.6** Survivors or casualties may not always be located in the immediate vicinity of a disaster scene. It is therefore important to consider the need to search the surrounding area. If this is necessary the police should normally co-ordinate search activities on land. Where the task may be labour intensive and cover a wide area, assistance should be sought from the other emergency services, the military or volunteers.

## The Fire and Rescue Service

**3.7** The primary role of the Fire and Rescue Service in an emergency is the rescue of people trapped by fire, wreckage or debris. They will prevent further escalation of an incident by controlling or extinguishing fires, by rescuing people and by undertaking other protective measures. They will deal with released chemicals or other contaminants in order to render the incident site safe or recommend exclusion zones. They will also assist the ambulance service with casualty handling and the police with recovery of bodies.

**3.8** The Fire and Rescue Service is likely to take the lead on health and safety issues for personnel of all agencies working within the inner cordon. However, safety of staff should normally be resolved and agreed between relevant agencies at the scene following an appropriate risk assessment. Any conflicts over responsibility for safety should be raised and resolved at multi-agency meetings. The Fire and Rescue Service will manage access to the inner cordon under their Incident Command System, liaising with the police about who should be allowed access. It is expected that other agency workers attending the scene arrive with the appropriate level of personal protective equipment and that they are adequately trained and briefed. However, in the event of any situation which is, or which is suspected to be, the result of terrorism, police will assume overall control and take initial responsibility for safety management, though the main responsibility for rescuing people and saving lives remains with the Fire and Rescue Service.

**3.9** Although the National Health Service is responsible for the decontamination of casualties, the Fire and Rescue Service will in practice often undertake mass decontamination of the general public in circumstances where large numbers of persons have been exposed to chemical and biological substances. This is done on behalf of the NHS, in consultation with the ambulance service.

## The National Health Service

### The ambulance service

**3.10** Ambulance services have responsibility for co-ordinating the on-site National Health Service response and determining the hospital(s) to which injured persons should be taken, which may depend on the types of injuries received. The officer of the ambulance service with overall responsibility for the work of the service at the scene of a major incident is the Ambulance Incident Officer (AIO). If necessary, the ambulance service will seek the attendance of a Medical Incident Officer (MIO) (see below).

**3.11** The ambulance service, in conjunction with the MIO and medical teams, endeavours to sustain life through effective emergency treatment at the scene, to determine the priority for release of trapped casualties and decontamination in conjunction with the fire service, and to transport the injured in order of priority to receiving hospitals.

**3.12** The ambulance service may seek support from voluntary aid societies (British Red Cross, St John Ambulance and St Andrew's Ambulance) in managing and transporting casualties.

### Hospitals

**3.13** Hospitals with Major Accident and Emergency Departments have been designated as potential casualty receiving hospitals. They respond to requests from the ambulance service to receive casualties for medical treatment and also provide appropriately trained staff to act as mobile medical teams and MIOs.

**3.14** An MIO has overall responsibility (in close liaison with the AIO) for the management of medical resources at the scene of a major incident. He/she should not be a member of a mobile medical team.

**3.15** Other hospitals provide support to receiving hospitals by taking patient transfers, etc.

### Public health

**3.16** The NHS makes public health advice available to the emergency services, NHS organisations and the public on a 24-hour basis. This advice is crucial for the control of communicable diseases and for public health concerns relating to hazards in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents.

### Primary and community care services

**3.17** The provision of primary and community care support is a crucial aspect of the NHS response. These services cover a range of health professions including General Practitioners, community nurses, health visitors, mental health services and pharmacists, many of whom would need to be involved following a major incident. Primary care trusts should therefore be involved in emergency planning processes.

### HM Coroner

**3.18** The role of the coroner is defined by statute. Coroners have responsibilities in relation to bodies lying within their district who have met a violent or unnatural death, or a sudden death of unknown cause.<sup>1</sup> They have to determine who has died, how, and when and where the death came about. This function is regardless of whether or not the cause of death arose within their district. They normally undertake this duty at a formal inquest (though if the incident results in a public inquiry chaired by a judge, a full inquest may not be held).

**3.19** Coroners should have an emergency plan relating to multiple fatalities, and coroners' officers should be familiar with its content. They should also be familiar with the police Major Incident Plan for their own area and with the local authority emergency plan.

<sup>1</sup>In Scotland the Procurator Fiscal provides a similar service

**3.20** The powers and duties of coroners do not vary with the number of people who are killed or the circumstances in which the deaths occur. A body at the scene of an incident should not be moved without the authority of the coroner and only the coroner may authorise a post-mortem and the release of a body to relatives. In general the police act as the coroner's officers when dealing with fatalities arising from an incident.

## The Maritime and Coastguard Agency

**3.21** The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is an executive agency within the Department for Transport. The MCA's Directorate of Operations consists of separate but integrated branches – HM Coastguard (responsible for search and rescue (SAR), prevention and response); the Counter Pollution and Response Branch; the Press Office; the Survey and Inspection Branch (ensures that the UK merchant fleet meets the correct safety standards and Port State Control of non-UK ships); an Enforcement Branch (carries out investigations and prosecutions following breaches of merchant shipping legislation); and a Technical Services Branch.

**3.22** Co-located with the MCA is the Secretary of State's Representative (SOSREP). SOSREP is empowered under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 and subsequent legislation to intervene on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport in salvage operations, given certain conditions. This includes powers to require that a ship be moved to, or be removed from, or not be moved from a specified area or locality or from UK waters; there are also powers to establish a Temporary Exclusion Zone. SOSREP has similar powers, delegated by the Secretary of State of the Department of Trade and Industry, regarding pollution from offshore oil and gas installations. These powers may only be exercised if there is a threat of significant pollution of the UK environment.

**3.23** The primary responsibility of HM Coastguard is to initiate and co-ordinate civil maritime search and rescue (and in some cases maritime incidents resulting from an air accident) within the United Kingdom Search and Rescue Region. This includes mobilising, organising and dispatching resources to assist people in distress at sea, in danger on the cliffs or shoreline, or in danger in inland areas due to

flooding. Local coastal safety committees based on police force boundaries ensure effective co-ordination of resources between police and coastguard for land-based incidents on or adjacent to coastlines. The Counter Pollution and Response Branch is responsible for dealing with pollution at sea and, in conjunction with local authorities, for the shoreline clean-up. It also has responsibility for approving Oil Spill Contingency Plans for Ports and Harbour Authorities and for providing appropriate training.

**3.24** HM Coastguard may assist other emergency services and local authorities during civil emergencies such as flooding at the specific request of the police or local authority in a limited capacity as follows.

They may provide:

- a) on-scene VHF communications by use of mobile and portable radios, particularly important if Royal National Lifeboat Institution units are deployed;
- b) communications links between relevant command posts; and
- c) coastguard liaison with other services at appropriate levels of command.

## Local authorities

**3.25** Each local authority manages a civil contingency planning function. Civil protection personnel act as a hub to co-ordinate planning, training and exercising within local authority departments. The effectiveness of this co-ordination is fundamental to the discharge of related community responsibilities in an emergency, whatever the cause. Local authority planning is carried out in close co-operation with the emergency services, utilities, many other industrial and commercial organisations, central government departments such as the Ministry of Defence (MoD) or Department of Health, other statutory organisations such as the Environment Agency, and many voluntary agencies.

**3.26** The principal concerns of local authorities in the immediate aftermath of an emergency are to provide support for the people in their area. In the first instance they do so by co-operating closely with the emergency services in the response phase.

**3.27** However, they also have many specific responsibilities of their own. They will use the resources of local authority departments to mitigate the effects of emergencies on people, property and

infrastructure and play a key role in co-ordinating the response from the voluntary sector. They also endeavour to continue normal support and care for the local and wider community throughout any disruption.

**3.28** In incidents involving multiple fatalities, the coroner's office will liaise with the local authority on the establishment of temporary mortuaries. As part of the local response, plans should already have been agreed for opening additional spaces at existing public or NHS mortuaries and/or establishing temporary mortuaries. These plans should include how to locate staff.

**3.29** As the emphasis moves from response to recovery, the local authority will take a leading role in facilitating the rehabilitation of the community and restoration of the environment. Even a relatively small emergency may overwhelm the resources of the local authority in whose area it occurs. Against this possibility plans need to be made that will, in appropriate circumstances, trigger arrangements for mutual aid from neighbouring authorities, delivering cross-boundary assistance if required. Arrangements may range from simple agreements offering whatever assistance is available in the event of an incident to more formal arrangements for the shared use of resources. This could include the use of vehicles, equipment and people. Payment arrangements may need to be included in any such agreement.

**3.30** Emergency financial assistance may be available for affected local authorities. This is done under the Bellwin Scheme in England and Wales, and by similar arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## The Environment Agency

**3.31** The Environment Agency (EA) has primary responsibilities for the environmental protection of water, land and air in England and Wales. The devolved administrations for Scotland<sup>2</sup> and Northern Ireland<sup>3</sup> have similar respective responsibilities. The EA has key responsibilities for maintaining and operating flood defences on certain specified rivers and coastlines. Whenever necessary, the EA's role is to provide remedial action to prevent and mitigate the

effects of the incident, to provide specialist advice, to give warnings to those likely to be affected, to monitor the effects of an incident and to investigate its cause. The EA also collects evidence for future enforcement or cost recovery. It also plays a major part in the UK Government's response to overseas nuclear incidents.

## The private sector

**3.32** Industrial or commercial organisations, including the utilities, may play a direct and vital part in the response to emergencies, especially if their personnel, operations or services have been involved. It is therefore essential that they are integrated into both the planning process and the command and control structures. This requirement is not, however, limited to those companies nominated as responders under Schedule 1 of the Act, and Local Resilience Forums should engage the full breadth of organisations identified by their risk analysis.

**3.33** Many companies, including utility providers and infrastructure managers, have diffuse operating areas that do not share formal or common boundaries with public sector agencies. The Local Resilience Forum provides a medium for simplifying the otherwise complex integration and liaison arrangements in advance of an emergency occurring. There are, however, finite limits to this process, and public sector planners and managers need to have a clear understanding of the structures and business imperatives of the companies involved.

**3.34** Those responsible for large outdoor and indoor sporting and musical venues may also have a role in the response to an emergency occurring elsewhere. It is therefore important that local planners integrate such organisations into the arrangements for managing both extrinsic and intrinsic risks of emergency.

**3.35** In the recovery phase the private sector usually becomes the predominant actor owing to the scale of its resources and its range of specialised expertise. This is especially so in those emergencies where the losses are insured and the major domestic insurance companies become engaged. For these reasons the

<sup>2</sup>In Scotland the Scottish Environment Protection Agency provides a similar service

<sup>3</sup>In Northern Ireland the Department of the Environment (Environment and Heritage Service) has similar responsibilities

strategic planning process should aim to create a framework of positive and flexible policies for the active engagement of the private sector from the outset, and for the effective programme management of extended recovery operations.

## The voluntary sector

**3.36** Volunteers can contribute to a wide range of activities, either as members of a voluntary organisation or as individuals. When responding to an emergency, they will always be under the control of a statutory authority.

## The armed services

**3.37** Military Aid to the Civil Community (MACC) is the provision of unarmed military assistance to the civil authorities when they have an urgent need for help to deal with an emergency arising from a natural disaster or a major incident. The guiding criteria are urgency and necessity within exceptional circumstances, which imply a requirement to save life, alleviate distress or protect property.

**3.38** The armed forces maintain no standing forces for MACC tasks. There are, by definition, no permanent or standing MACC responses. Assistance is provided on an availability basis and the armed forces cannot make a commitment that guarantees assistance to meet specific emergencies. Neither the production of contingency plans nor the participation in civil exercises guarantees the provision of MACC support. It is therefore essential that responding agencies do not base plans upon assumptions of military assistance.

**3.39** The regional Civil Contingencies Reaction Forces are part of the Reserve Forces and require mobilisation before deployment. They are not, therefore, well placed to provide immediate MACC support, but if they are required they will mobilise and deploy as rapidly as possible to assist continuing operations.

**3.40** The Army acts as the lead Service for MACC on land. The Regional Brigade Headquarters will be able to give advice and should be contacted in the first instance. All such headquarters have 24-hour emergency contact telephone numbers and established liaison relationships with the members of

Regional and Local Resilience Forums. In exceptional circumstances, requests for assistance may be directed to any Service unit, station or establishment. Any request for assistance should focus on the capability required: the solution will be determined by the availability of military resources and the commander's judgement. In all circumstances, Service personnel employed on MACC tasks will operate in formed bodies under military command.

**3.41** Where there is a direct threat to life the MoD may, at its discretion, choose to waive the recovery of costs. In cases where human life is not deemed to be in danger, civil organisations will be required to meet all or some of the costs of the Service response. When the response moves towards the recovery phase, a danger to human life no longer exists and continued military assistance will be considered as routine and charged for at rates determined by the MoD. Civil authorities should consider the disengagement of military assistance at this point if very high costs are to be avoided. This will usually occur at the same time as the leadership and co-ordination responsibility transfers from the emergency services to the local authority or other organisation, and while the engagement of private sector resources is advancing.

## Search and rescue

**3.42** The MoD has responsibility for providing SAR facilities for military operations, exercises and training within the UK and, by agreement, is responsible for civil aeronautical SAR on behalf of the Department for Transport. Where the coverage provided by military SAR assets meets the civil SAR coverage requirements, they will be made available for civil maritime and land-based SAR operations.

The MoD establishes and maintains the Air Rescue Co-ordination Centre (ARCC) at Kinloss for the operation and co-ordination of civil and military aeronautical SAR, and requests for SAR should be placed directly with ARCC.

# Chapter 4

## Management and co-ordination of local operations

### Summary

- This chapter describes the organisation and function of the management, control and co-ordination of local operations undertaken in response to and recovery from rapid onset emergencies (paragraphs 4.1–4.7).
- It details the responsibilities and functions of the operational, tactical and strategic levels of integrated multi-agency emergency management, and provides detailed guidance on the operation of Strategic Co-ordinating Groups (paragraphs 4.8–4.28).
- It includes descriptions of the specialised measures that apply to:
  - localised emergencies (paragraphs 4.29–4.46);
  - maritime emergencies (paragraphs 4.47–4.53); and
  - wide area natural emergencies (paragraphs 4.55–4.57).
- It also provides guidance on the technical information management and communications measures that should apply in an emergency (paragraphs 4.58–4.69).

## Objectives for a combined response

**4.1** Irrespective of the particular responsibilities of organisations and agencies that may be involved with the emergency response they will all work to the following common objectives:

- a) saving and protecting life;
- b) relieving suffering;
- c) protecting property;
- d) providing the public with information;
- e) containing the emergency – limiting its escalation or spread;
- f) maintaining critical services;
- g) maintaining normal services at an appropriate level;
- h) protecting the health and safety of personnel;
- i) safeguarding the environment;
- j) facilitating investigations and inquiries;
- k) promoting self-help and recovery;
- l) restoring normality as soon as possible; and
- m) evaluating the response and identifying lessons to be learned.

## Management framework

**4.2** In order to achieve an integrated response to a major emergency, the capabilities of the emergency services must be closely linked with those of local authorities and other agencies. The national generic management framework has a common architecture irrespective of the cause or nature of the incident, but it remains flexible to varying circumstances. This framework defines relationships between differing levels of command and management, and allows each agency to tailor its own response plans to interface with the plans of others. It also ensures that all parties understand their and each other's roles in the combined response, thus helping to ensure the flexibility needed to suit local circumstances.

**4.3** Under the framework, the management of the response to major emergencies will normally be undertaken at one or more of three ascending levels – operational, tactical and strategic – that are defined by their differing functions rather than by specific rank, grade or status.

**4.4** The terms 'Bronze', 'Silver' and 'Gold' (for 'operational', 'tactical' and 'strategic' respectively) are in common use in many organisations as substitutes

– for example 'Bronze commanders', 'Gold Control'. They provide less clarity, however, for those unfamiliar with the topic. Interpretation of what they mean varies and further confusion can arise if they are equated too closely with rank structures. The terms 'operational', 'tactical' and 'strategic' are therefore used in this publication to clarify the functions.

**4.5** At the start of any incident for which there has been no warning the **operational** level will be activated first. Escalation or a greater awareness of the situation may require the implementation of a **tactical** level and, finally, a **strategic** level should this prove necessary. The precise identity and location of the strategic level will depend on the nature and severity of the emergency, its geographical spread in terms of area and boundaries crossed, and manifold other factors. In each case the principle of 'co-ordination at the highest necessary level' should be applied in reaching the appropriate solution.

**4.6** In its planning, each agency will need to recognise these three management levels and each of their requirements. This will allow the integration of management processes across agency boundaries. It is not intended that the management levels necessarily predetermine the rank or seniority of the individuals discharging the functions.

**4.7** If any one agency activates its major incident plan (declaring a major incident) then others need to assess their potential involvement and liaison arrangements in line with agreed protocols. It may or may not be necessary for others to start to activate their own major incident plans. The authority to declare a major incident for an organisation is vested in appropriate officers of that organisation. A major incident for one is not necessarily a major incident for others.

## Operational level

**4.8** The **operational** level of management reflects the normal day-to-day arrangements for responding to smaller-scale emergencies. It is the level at which the management of 'hands-on' work is undertaken at the incident site(s) or associated areas.

**4.9** First responders will take appropriate immediate measures and assess the extent of problems. Within the imperatives of tasks there must be due regard to risk reduction measures and the health and safety of personnel. Operational commanders or managers will

concentrate their resources on the specific tasks within their areas of responsibility. They will act on delegated responsibility from their parent organisations until other levels of command are established.

**4.10** Individual agencies retain full command of the resources that they apply within a geographical area or use for a specific purpose. Each agency should communicate fully and continually with others to ensure an efficient and combined effort. The police will normally act as the co-ordinator of the operational response at an identifiable scene.

**4.11** These arrangements will be adequate for the effective co-ordination and resolution of most minor emergencies. However, for more serious incidents that require significantly greater resources it may be necessary to implement an additional level of management. A key function of an operational commander or manager will be to consider whether circumstances warrant a **tactical** level of management.

### Tactical level

**4.12** A **tactical** level of management is introduced to provide overall management of the response. Tactical managers:

- a) determine priorities in allocating resources;
- b) obtain further resources as required;
- c) plan and co-ordinate when tasks will be undertaken;
- d) assess prevailing risks;
- e) strike an overall balance between tasks and risks;
- f) take appropriate risk reduction measures; and
- g) give due regard to the health and safety requirements of staff and public.

**4.13** Where there is an identifiable scene, tactical management is usually undertaken from an incident control point established in the vicinity. Many tactical functions will then be discharged at or close to the scene. However, some agencies (for example local authorities) will prefer to operate from their administrative offices but will often send liaison officers to enhance co-ordination. Planning must also take into account that there may be a number of individual scenes, or in fact no actual scene to attend (for widespread disruption, health emergencies, if the incident is overseas, etc).

**4.14** Inter-agency meetings at appropriate intervals between tactical managers and relevant liaison

officers will aim to achieve effective co-ordination.

Tactical managers must concentrate on overall general management. While they need to be aware of what is happening at operational level they should leave the responsibility for dealing with that level to operational managers. When the situation warrants it, a **strategic** level of management/command should be established as early as possible.

### Strategic level

**4.15** In exceptional circumstances, one or more agencies may find it necessary to implement a **strategic** level of management. Major emergencies can place considerable demands on the resources of the responding organisations, with consequent disruption to day-to-day activities. They may have long-term implications for people or the environment. Such matters require attention by senior management, and possibly also by elected members in local authorities.

**4.16** The purpose of implementing a strategic level of management is to establish a framework of policy within which tactical managers will work. Strategic managers will:

- a) establish a framework for the overall management of the incident;
- b) determine the strategic aim and objectives, and review them regularly;
- c) formulate and implement an integrated media policy;
- d) ensure there are clear lines of communication with tactical commanders and managers;
- e) ensure there is long-term resourcing and expertise for management/command resilience;
- f) prioritise the demands of tactical commanders and managers;
- g) allocate resources and expertise to meet tactical commanders' requirements;
- h) undertake appropriate liaison with strategic managers in other agencies;
- i) plan beyond the immediate response phase for recovering from the emergency and returning to a state of normality; and
- j) avoid and prevent engagement in details and decisions more properly and effectively managed at lower levels.

**4.17** Strategic command for major incidents should be seen as standard practice, not the exception. It is easy to dismantle if not required, and removes the

potential for tactical managers/commanders to be reluctant to ask for a strategic level of management/command. The need for a strategic level may arise if tactical management does not have the required resources or expertise available. It may also arise if there is a need to co-ordinate more than one incident/scene for which tactical command has been established. Strategic management is normally undertaken away from any major emergency scene.

**4.18** The requirement for strategic management may be confined to one particular agency. However, certain incidents require a multi-agency response at the strategic level when the issues which arise affect the responsibilities or activities of more than one organisation. Experience has shown that such issues can best be dealt with by establishing a Strategic Co-ordinating Group. This does not replace individual agencies' strategic management mechanisms, which will continue, but complements them to ensure that policy and approaches are effectively co-ordinated.

### Strategic Co-ordinating Group

**4.19** The purpose of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) is to determine and promulgate policies for the execution of the response, and to ensure their coherence and integration with any subsequent recovery phase. It defines the desired outcomes of the consequence management operations, sets the strategic aims, integrates actions, drives forward planning and monitors progress. The Group must think and decide forwards on an extended time-scale well beyond the immediate, scanning for emerging risks and opportunities; look sideways across the full breadth of consequences, agency responsibilities and geographic boundaries; and consider interests and political ramifications from local to national.

**4.20** The SCG does not have the collective hierarchical authority to issue executive orders. Each organisation represented retains its own responsibilities, and has varying degrees of control over its entities operating at the lower levels. The Group therefore has to rely on a process of co-ordination through consensus rather than command in order to secure consistency between the overall strategic intent and the actions taken by the diverse agencies at the tactical and operational levels. The effectiveness of the SCG therefore rests upon every member having a grasp of the responsibilities and capabilities of all other

participants within an overall framework of mutual trust and understanding born of sound preparation, liaison and training. Satisfying these prerequisites for success is a major responsibility of the Local Resilience Forum in the *preparation* phase.

**4.21** The SCG should be based at an appropriate pre-planned location, away from the distractions of the disaster scene. In most circumstances it will be a police responsibility to establish the Group and chair it initially. For this reason it is usual to locate the SCG at police headquarters in the first instance. However, during the transition to the recovery phase when the emergency services may have little or no involvement, it will normally relocate to the local authority or another relevant organisation (eg Environment Agency).

**4.22** There are some types of emergency, notably those that do not originate in a single event or emerge slowly, in which other arrangements will apply. In those circumstances an agency other than an emergency service may initiate and lead the SCG. In due course the leadership of the group may pass to another agency for the recovery phase in common with other forms of emergency.

**4.23** The SCG is normally made up of a nominated senior member from each of the key organisations involved with the response. Each person must be empowered to make executive decisions in respect of their organisation's resources without the need to refer back; and to have the authority to seek the aid of others in support of their role.

**4.24** The SCG will need to take account of the features of the particular incident, together with the professional expertise of each of the agencies and their statutory duties. It will consider requests for advice and assistance from individual services and agencies. On occasions it may be necessary to assign the control of specific functions to one or more of the agencies. In some circumstances, such as a terrorist incident, it may be necessary for the police to take executive action in respect of the total incident.

**4.25** The Group's strategic role will have interfaces with regional and central government interests. When appropriate, it will provide the focus for communication to and from the lead government department (LGD). Government advisers or liaison officers from the LGD or Regional Resilience Team

(RRT) may attend SCG meetings depending on the nature, scale and severity of the emergency and its political ramifications.

**4.26** In the event of a wide-area emergency the situation may overwhelm the local response the Group will need to work in conjunction with neighbouring SCGs, and, as necessary, with the responsible regional office, LGD or devolved administration. Where appropriate, the Regional Office may assume a role of strategic co-ordination through the establishment of a Regional Civil Emergencies Committee or facilitate enhanced local co-ordination through the engagement of the RRT (see Chapter 7 for more details). In wide-area incidents, the Regional Office may, depending on the situation, become the primary communication channel with central government. This does not, however, invalidate the need for the local SCG. In the exceptional case of a state of emergency being invoked under section 21 of the Act, then the function of the regional level may change from consultation and co-ordination to empowered direction.

**4.27** The SCG must develop a strategy for providing information to the public and for dealing with the media. If an LGD is engaged in the emergency then the upward co-ordination of media lines is essential if public confidence is to be maintained. A designated media centre and nominated manager should form part of plans at this level. While the police media relations team will usually manage during the response phase, there must be a seamless handover of this function to the agency leading the recovery. These issues are addressed in detail in Chapter 6.

**4.28** Further strategic issues that may need to be considered include:

- a) welfare and support for those dealing with or affected by events, including the relatives and friends of those killed, injured or traumatised;
- b) long-term implications for the community or the environment;
- c) visits by VIPs;
- d) inquiries and investigations; and
- e) international and diplomatic dimensions.

## The response to localised emergencies

**4.29** Within the United Kingdom there is substantial experience of emergencies occurring within the

bounds of relatively small areas. To bring some order to the almost inevitable confusion it is important that the emergency services establish control over the immediate area and also build up arrangements for co-ordinating the contributions to the response. Each service needs to establish its own control arrangements, but continuing liaison between the services is essential. An effective response depends on good communication and mutual understanding.

**4.30** It is generally accepted that the first members of the emergency services to arrive on the scene should make a rapid assessment and report back to their control room – not immediately become involved with rescue. Any immediately available information should be provided about:

- a) where it is;
- b) what is involved; and
- c) which services and resources are present or required.

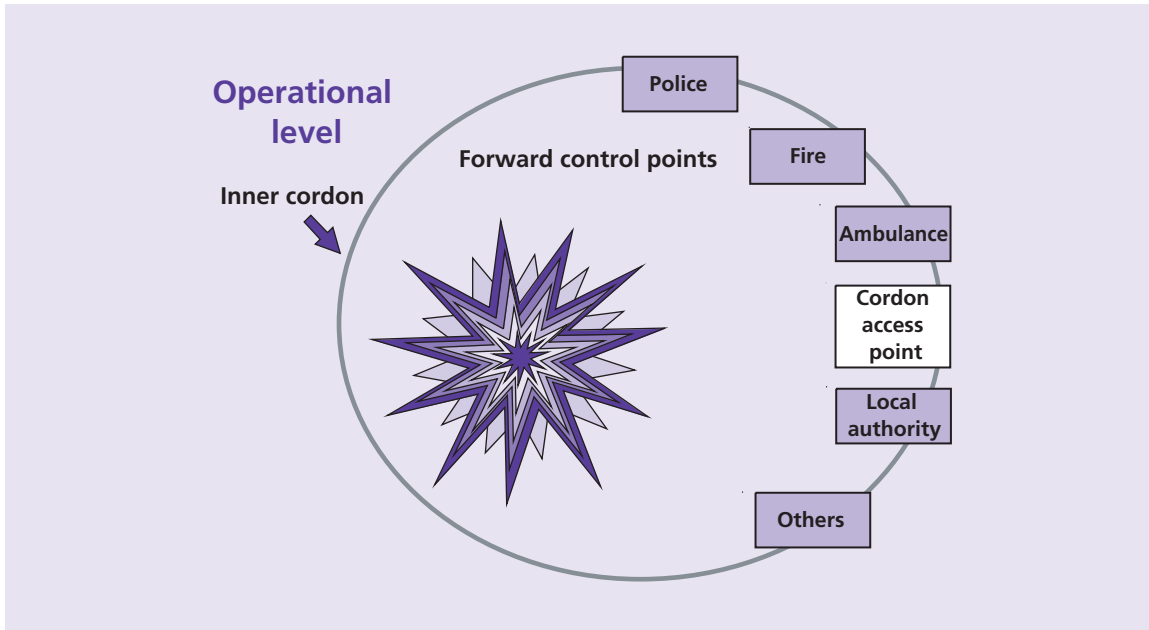
**4.31** As soon as possible, information should be given on hazards (actual and potential), access to the scene, estimates of the number and main types of injuries, possible control and rendezvous points and any other relevant information.

**4.32** The control room that receives the initial message should, in accordance with established plans, alert the other emergency services and local authorities. In accordance with their own procedures, those agencies will then alert personnel or activate appropriate response plans to the level they judge necessary. Agreed protocols should be in place for these agencies to alert any relevant commercial, industrial, voluntary or other organisations as appropriate.

**4.33** For localised incidents, tactical management is usually undertaken from an incident control point established in the vicinity of the incident site.

**4.34** The normal procedure for a major emergency with an identifiable scene is that the police assume the management of overall co-ordination. This approach ensures that resources are used to best effect and avoids situations where, for example, assets may be called upon simultaneously by different agencies. This is particularly the case for major emergencies that occur near or across boundaries; where the operational boundaries of agencies are dissimilar; or when organisational changes are under way or have recently been completed.

Figure 4.1: Setting up an inner cordon

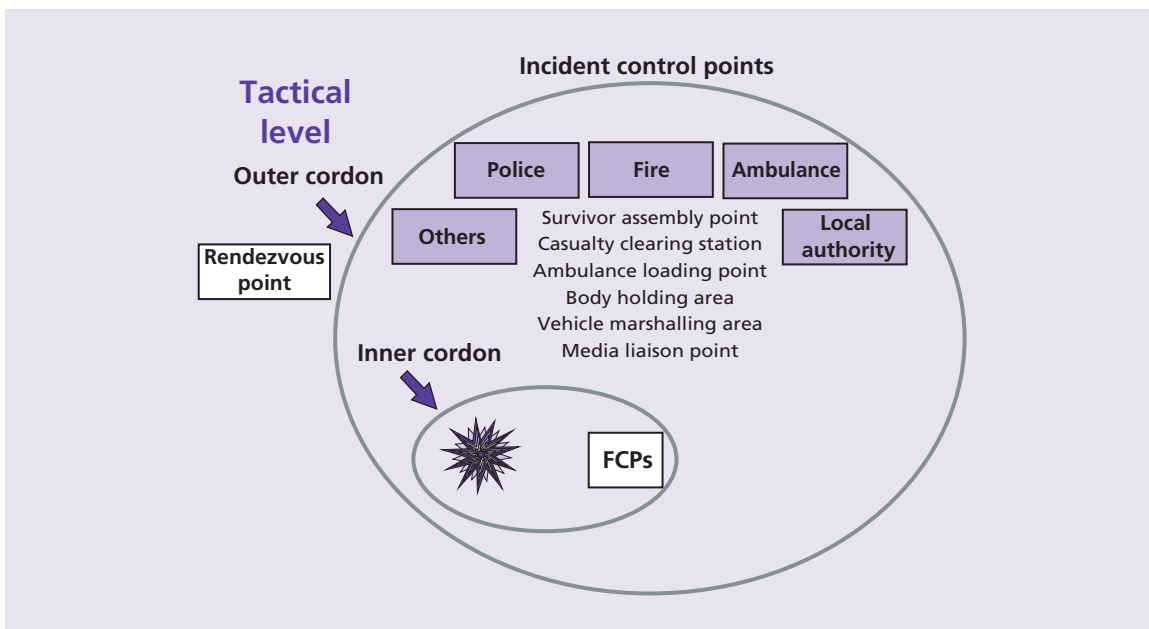


**4.35** At each level of management that is implemented (operational, tactical, strategic) there is a need for an individual agency to manage its own activities effectively while contributing to effective liaison and co-ordination with counterparts in other organisations. The three levels of emergency management can be adapted for use by any organisation associated with the response. Adoption of this generally agreed methodology can aid communications and avoid inter-agency confusion.

**4.36** Arrangements which will have to be made for the immediate vicinity of a disaster scene include the following:

- a) assessing control measures with regard to reducing risk;
- b) deciding which specific functions should be controlled by each agency after taking due account of:
  - i) the circumstances;
  - ii) the professional expertise of the emergency services and other agencies;

Figure 4.2: Setting up an outer cordon



- iii) any statutory obligations; and
- iv) overall priorities;
- c) reception and engagement of utility company staff (gas, water and electricity) on essential safety work; and
- d) setting up an inner cordon to secure the immediate scene and provide a measure of protection for personnel working within the area, as illustrated in Figure 4.1 below. All those entering the inner cordon should report to a designated cordon access point. This ensures that they can be safely accounted for should there be any escalation of the incident, and affords opportunity for briefing about the evacuation signal, hazards and control measures and other issues about which they need to be aware. People must have an appropriate level of personal protective equipment before entering the inner cordon. People leaving the inner cordon must register their departure.

**4.37** If practical, an outer cordon may have to be established around the vicinity of the incident to control access to a much wider area around the site, as shown in Figure 4.2. This will allow the emergency services and other agencies to work unhindered and in privacy. Access through the outer cordon for essential non-emergency service personnel should be by way of a Scene Access Control Point. The outer cordon may then be further supplemented by a traffic cordon.

**4.38** Other issues that should be addressed at this level include:

- a) establishing internal traffic routes for emergency and other vehicles (including a one-way system where appropriate); and
- b) deciding on the location of key functions or facilities; for example:
  - i) casualty clearing station(s) to which the injured can be taken;
  - ii) an ambulance loading point for those who need to be taken to hospital;

- iii) a collection/assembly point for survivors before they are taken to a survivor reception centre;
- iv) possible helicopter landing site(s);
- v) a rendezvous point or points for all responding personnel, which may be some distance from the scene in the event of a bomb incident or incidents involving hazardous materials;
- vi) a marshalling area for assembling vehicles and equipment;
- vii) a body holding area which is under cover and protected from public view; and
- viii) a media liaison point.

The possible need for evacuation of the public from the immediate vicinity may also have to be considered at a very early stage. Other functions will be carried out outside of the immediate scene. Box 4.1 details these.

**4.39** For the majority of major emergencies there are significant benefits if an officer who can represent the interests of the relevant local authorities can be in attendance at the incident control point at tactical level, if this is established. Arrangements should also be in place for calling in liaison officers from other organisations which may need to contribute to the response, for example the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the Environment Agency, health organisations, gas, electricity, telephone or water companies, industrial or commercial concerns, or environmental specialists.

**4.40** Liaison officers at the scene should be clearly identifiable. They should be equipped with their own communications so that they can remain in contact with their organisations to obtain any further support rapidly. Where local authority services might be required at short notice, resources should be assembled nearby so that they are ready for immediate action if called upon by the emergency services.

**4.41** Some functions will by their very nature be discharged outside cordons and away from the scene

### Box 4.1: Key off-scene locations and functions

Local authority crisis/emergency centre  
Rest centres  
Friends and relatives reception centres  
Survivor reception centres

Casualty bureau  
Temporary mortuary  
Receiving hospitals  
Media liaison points

but need to be considered as essential components of an integrated response.

**4.42** It may be appropriate for emergency service or other representatives to be present within the local authority's emergency/crisis management centre, which provides the focus for the management and co-ordination of all local authority activities.

**4.43** If an incident occurs within the perimeter of an industrial or commercial establishment, public venue, airport or harbour, it is essential that a Site Incident Officer from the affected organisation establishes liaison with responding organisations. Such a representative can ease access to facilities within the establishment and act as a link between the establishment's senior management and the emergency management structure.

**4.44** Emergency flying restrictions may be required in order to minimise risks to air users. In addition, down-draught and noise from helicopters can disrupt rescue and fire-fighting operations, cause hazards to rescue personnel, damage property and destroy evidence. Moreover, the presence of unauthorised aircraft poses confliction hazards to police and rescue helicopters operating in the area. It may therefore be necessary to regulate flights in the vicinity; the *National Air Traffic Services Instructions for Establishing Emergency Flying Restrictions within the United Kingdom 1989* describe how these restrictions are imposed.

**4.45** Liaison with the Civil Aviation Authority will normally be through the police, who will appoint a senior police officer as the Emergency Controlling Officer. All requests relating to imposition, amendment or cessation of flying restrictions should be made through this officer. It may also be necessary to make contact with military air traffic controllers.

**4.46** Where the response may prove prolonged or complex each service may establish its own management arrangements using a convenient building and/or specially designed vehicles equipped with suitable communications. These vehicles will normally be parked adjacent to each other, provided there are no radio interference problems, and in the vicinity of the disaster.

## Maritime emergencies

**4.47** The objectives of the combined response and a tiered management framework also apply to maritime emergencies. However, the nature of a maritime emergency raises specific management and co-ordination issues that do not arise on land.

**4.48** The offshore response to a maritime emergency will normally be co-ordinated by the appropriate Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) or Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre (MRSC) of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). However, it is essential that land and maritime authorities liaise at the earliest opportunity to address the particular problems caused by such emergencies. The land-based authorities are responsible for the reception and care of survivors once they are on shore. Further liaison will be required for dealing with wreckage and pollution and to decide on appropriate destinations and berthing arrangements for vessels in distress.

**4.49** There are no statutory obligations for the fire and rescue service to respond offshore but arrangements for dealing with fires, chemical hazards and rescue from vessels at sea have been formalised with the MCA.

**4.50** There are a total of 18 districts around the coast of the UK. Each has a co-ordination centre: either an MRCC or an MRSC. London Coastguard, based near the Thames Barrier, also covers the River Thames from Teddington to Canvey Island. These co-ordination centres are staffed on a 24-hour basis. They are fitted with computerised command, control and communications equipment which enables the operators to receive distress calls via:

- a) 999 (or 112) telephone;
- b) VHF and medium frequency (MF) radio (voice);
- c) VHF and MF radio (digital); and
- d) satellite communications (voice, digital, distress beacon alerts).

**4.51** Search and rescue operations, whether offshore, inshore or on the coast, are controlled, directed and managed from a single co-ordination centre (either MRCC or MRSC). Centres are also fitted with direction-finding facilities to assist the location of distress calls.

**4.52** Pollution and salvage incidents will be co-ordinated from either a Marine Response Centre (pollution) or a Salvage Control Unit (salvage).<sup>1</sup> These

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 3 for details of the powers of the Secretary of State's Representative in relation to salvage and pollution matters

units will provide facilities and a focal point for specialists from the respective interests and associated authorities and services. They may be located at the nearest MRCC/MRSC or at a port or harbour complex, depending on the circumstances of the incident.

**4.53** It is important to remember that maritime incidents have an onshore dimension. Inter-agency liaison needs to recognise the shore-based consequences at an early stage and make appropriate arrangements.

## Terrorist incidents

**4.54** The response to a terrorist incident will be similar to that of any emergency but the police will take overall command. In parallel with police actions the other agencies should continue to discharge their responsibilities for the management of the potential or actual consequences of the terrorists' actions, using the same procedures and approaches described elsewhere in this chapter.

## Handling wide-area emergencies

**4.55** Historically the United Kingdom has been more fortunate than some other countries, suffering at a lesser frequency and scale from such wide-area natural disasters as storms, flooding or earthquakes. There is sufficient experience, however, to highlight some characteristics of the response to wide-area emergency.

**4.56** In a generally densely populated country, where wide-area emergencies are likely to affect large numbers of people, self-help will be the first response. The disaster can overwhelm local resources, disrupt telecommunications and cut off access or

egress routes. Further blockage of routes may occur as people attempt to leave an affected area.

**4.57** However, the response to a wide-area emergency should be similar to any other emergency and follow the guidance in this chapter. It is axiomatic that inter-agency strategic management will be required in such circumstances, leading to the activation of SCGs in all affected areas. By definition a wide-area emergency will involve one or more regions and an LGD. Extreme cases may require the invocation of a state of emergency in one or more regions. The concept of operations for the regional level is described in Chapters 7 and 8.

## Communications

**4.58** Good communications are at the heart of an effective response. Plans must set out arrangements to supplement usual communications facilities and provide properly trained staff. Reliable information must be passed correctly and without delay so that all responding agencies share a common picture of the situation.

**4.59** Effective emergency communications involve many information management activities (see Box 4.2). Essentially, procedures must aim to provide the right people with the right information at the right time in a form that they can understand, assimilate and act upon.

**4.60** Planning for emergency communications must therefore pay close attention to procedures, language use, human factors and skilled use of different communications media. Wherever possible, emergency communications procedures must make maximum use of existing skills and routine practices. Appropriate training must be provided for the extra dimensions to communications that emergencies bring.

### Box 4.2: Information management activities

providing  
receiving  
summarising  
checking  
collating

relaying  
capturing  
interpreting  
prioritising  
logging

distributing  
responding  
editing  
filtering  
recording

### Box 4.3: Media available for communicating in an emergency

radio	geographical information systems (GIS)
land line	CCTV
mobile phone	databases
text messaging	video conferencing
pager	public television networks
fax	public radio networks
e-mail	internet

**4.61** Planning should aim to provide an integrated approach to emergency communications through identifying appropriate use of available media (see Box 4.3). While these all play a vital part in response, planning should consider the important role of 'low-tech' information transfer – briefings, liaison meetings, use of display boards, paper forms and so forth. It is essential that plans and procedures are robust enough to withstand the possible technical failure of one or more communications media and the consequences of disruption of supporting supplies and infrastructure. Such failures and the use of reversionary modes should feature regularly in training and exercises.

## Telecommunications

**4.62** The two major operators in the UK – British Telecommunications plc (BT) and Cable & Wireless plc (C&W) – have set up services for use in the event of civil emergencies and major disasters. These services are able to respond quickly to meet the needs of the emergency services and local authorities where requirements have been discussed with BT and C&W beforehand. They offer a wide range of facilities including simple telephone circuits, fax, ISDN, audio and video conferencing, private circuits (kilostream and megastream) and small switches.

**4.63** Emergency services and local authorities have 24-hour access to the respective service provider by using the BT National Emergency Linkline and the C&W Direct Access Response. These are not for normal business enquiries, and misuse may cause confusion and undue delay to emergency communications. In the event of an emergency these companies will mobilise the resources requested, including an Incident Manager if needed. BT and C&W have a memorandum of understanding for mutual assistance when they are supporting authorities involved with a major emergency. Other licensed operators may also be able to provide support, but arrangements will need to be pre-planned.

**4.64** A major emergency can produce traffic overload of the Public Service Telephone Network (PSTN). This may occur as members of the public seek assurance about the safety of others and/or from damage by an incident to the telephone systems. In the first instance the telephone operators will apply normal, business-as-usual, traffic management measures. Such action will protect the network but essential services responding to the incident will be subject to the same restriction.

**4.65** If a casualty bureau is established, PSTN controllers will need notification of the bureau numbers as soon as possible so that they have time to establish the appropriate telephone network controls in order to reduce the likelihood of overloaded telephone exchanges.

**4.66** When the public telephone networks do become overloaded, restrictions may need to be invoked. Schemes are available for both the mobile and fixed telephone services to give call preference to registered essential users.

## ACCess OverLoad Control

**4.67** Mobile telephone numbers of essential users can be registered via a sponsoring process, for the ACCess OverLoad Control (ACCOLC) scheme. This scheme is supported by the four main mobile telephone operators in the UK. The police Incident Commander is normally the authority able to invoke ACCOLC. Exceptionally, the Cabinet Office may take this responsibility after consultation with the LGD. It is important to recognise that there are risks in invoking ACCOLC: non-registered users, who may nonetheless be important to the emergency in question, may not be so easily contactable once ACCOLC is invoked. Organisations should therefore ensure that appropriate users are registered.

## Government Telephone Preference Scheme

**4.68** Fixed service telephone numbers of essential users can be registered for the Government Telephone Preference Scheme (GTPS). GTPS is available from BT and C&W (and Kingston Communications in the Hull area only). Under GTPS all telephones will still be able to receive calls. Rules for invoking GTPS are similar in principle to those for ACCOLC.

**4.69** Those responsible for emergency arrangements must register key numbers in advance and ensure they are regularly checked and updated. Key numbers for fixed telephones which will continue to be allowed to make outgoing calls under GTPS may not necessarily belong to those with a response role, and other categories should be considered, for example kidney dialysis patients.

officers and chief executives will wish to ensure that there is appropriate follow-up to any lessons which emerge from the debriefing process. Appropriate follow-up will depend on the circumstances but might include revision of plans, procedures and training, strengthening of liaison with other agencies, devising of small exercises to test alternative approaches, and so forth.

## Debriefing, inquiries and lessons emerging

**4.70** In order to facilitate operational debriefing and to provide evidence for inquiries (whether judicial, public, technical, inquest or of some other form), it is essential to keep records. Single-agency and inter-agency debriefing processes should aim to capture information while memories are fresh.

**4.71** A comprehensive record should be kept of all events, decisions, reasoning behind key decisions and actions taken. Each organisation should maintain its own records. It is important that a nominated information manager be responsible for overseeing the keeping and storage of the records and files created during the response, and also for assuring the retention of those that existed before the emergency occurred. Any document destruction under routine housekeeping arrangements should be suspended. All electronic records should be copied directly to non-volatile media in accordance with certified processes.

**4.72** Good record keeping serves a further purpose, whether or not there is a formal inquiry. It allows lessons to be identified and made more widely available for the benefit of those who might be involved in future emergencies. Additionally, chief

# Chapter 5

## Care and treatment of people

### Summary

- This chapter is primarily oriented towards emergencies occurring in the UK that do not inflict catastrophic casualties. However, pragmatic application of this guidance and its underlying principles will support action in other circumstances (paragraphs 5.1–5.4).
- It provides guidance on:
  - care of uninjured survivors, including the related functions of survivor reception and rest centres (paragraphs 5.7–5.12);
  - handling of friends and relatives, and the operation of friends and relatives reception centres (paragraphs 5.13–5.16);
  - longer-term establishment of family assistance centres during the recovery phase (paragraph 5.17);
  - functions and organisation of police casualty bureaux (5.18–5.26);
  - the procedures relevant to air accidents and the operation of the Emergency Procedures Information Centre (paragraphs 5.27–5.28);
  - dealing with fatalities, including the procedural requirements of HM Coroner, the handling of bodies, temporary mortuaries and identification procedures and sensitivities (paragraphs 5.29–5.48);
  - the specific needs in emergencies of children, faith and ethnic communities, and staff in the responding agencies and services (paragraphs 5.49–5.59);
  - memorials and appeals (paragraphs 5.60–5.62); and
  - evacuation (paragraphs 5.63–5.76).

## Introduction

**5.1** The care of those involved in a major emergency and the way they are treated lie at the heart of the response. In particular, sudden impact emergencies may cause physical injury, affect people's mental state or affect their material welfare. Such events are the main focus of this chapter, although dealing with other types of emergency will also generate stresses and strains. In short, welfare considerations embrace anyone who may be affected. Experience and study of major emergencies has identified the following key groups of people:

- a) those who have been injured;
- b) those directly caught up in the emergency occurrence, but who are not physically hurt;
- c) families and friends of the injured, missing or deceased;
- d) the deceased;
- e) rescuers and response workers;
- f) wider sections of the community whose lives are affected or disrupted; and
- g) witnesses and spectators.

**5.2** In addition to medical assistance or material welfare, some of those who are suffering from the effects of an emergency may need immediate access to social and psychological support. Welfare services (for social, material and psychological support) should be set up in the immediate aftermath and will undoubtedly be needed in the medium and longer term. Much will depend on the nature and scale of events and local circumstances. Local authorities are responsible for co-ordinating the provision of this support. Many local authorities maintain crisis support teams who are specially trained to respond to the particular personal problems associated with emergencies.

**5.3** Responders from statutory services or voluntary organisations may also need support. Organisations should have plans in place to monitor the well-being of their personnel and provide appropriate assistance, both in the short and the long term.

**5.4** This chapter is primarily oriented towards emergencies occurring in the UK. In dealing with emergencies elsewhere in the world involving UK citizens, responding agencies should draw on this guidance pragmatically and selectively. Similarly, an emergency that involved catastrophic casualties

would preclude compliance with the detailed provisions of this chapter, and responders should therefore seek to observe its underlying principles.

## The injured

**5.5** The care and treatment of those injured is a high-priority response objective. Injured survivors may be taken to a casualty clearing station. Medical and paramedical personnel will carry out triage and any appropriate stabilisation measures before ensuring that casualties are evacuated in accordance with priorities for hospital treatment. The casualty clearing station is usually sited in a building, tent or temporary shelter close to the ambulance loading point.

**5.6** The Ambulance Incident Officer will be responsible for ensuring:

- a) the establishment of medical communications on site;
- b) the transport of medical teams;
- c) whether a Medical Incident Officer (MIO) should be appointed;
- d) in consultation with the MIO, conveyance of casualties to appropriate receiving hospital(s);
- e) transport of casualties to distant specialist hospitals by helicopter, where appropriate;
- f) the provision of all ambulance resources necessary for the ongoing treatment of casualties; and
- g) the distribution and replenishment of medical and first-aid supplies.

## Care of uninjured survivors

**5.7** Those who have survived a major emergency with no physical injuries (or with only minor injuries) may nevertheless be traumatised and suffering from shock, intense anxiety and grief. They will, therefore, need to be treated with great sensitivity.

**5.8** Survivors are usually frantic for information about their own relatives, friends and colleagues, information about the incident, number and location of other survivors, and what will happen to them next and when. Their initial needs are likely to include:

- a) shelter and warmth;
- b) information and assistance with communication;
- c) support in their distress;
- d) food and drink;

- e) first aid to treat minor injuries; and
- f) changing, washing and toilet facilities, and perhaps spare clothing.

**5.9** Survivors may also need social support beyond these immediate requirements – help in contacting family and friends, transport home, finding temporary accommodation, and financial advice and assistance.

**5.10** The local authority, particularly social services departments, will need to co-ordinate both the professional and voluntary sector welfare response. They will need to work closely with health professionals and with police family liaison officers where appropriate. Working in conjunction with the police and other agencies, local authorities should establish the following facilities to support survivors:

- a) a **survivor reception centre** – a secure area set up by the local authority to which survivors not requiring acute hospital treatment can be taken for short-term shelter, first aid, documentation and interview; and
- b) a **rest centre** – a building designated or taken over by the local authority for the temporary accommodation of evacuees and homeless survivors, with overnight facilities if necessary.

**5.11** Psychological welfare is also important. Some apparently uninjured survivors may display adverse symptoms, immediately or later. For this reason there must be an appropriate mix of social services, medical and police family liaison personnel at survivor reception centres and, if necessary, at rest centres. The responsibility for organising, staffing and providing logistical support at survivor reception centres and rest centres usually rests with the local authority, supported by other organisations. The police maintain order and security and provide family liaison officers for the welfare response if appropriate. The control of access to such centres should aim to prevent uninvited media representatives or onlookers disturbing those inside.

**5.12** Survivors will often be able to provide crucial information about what happened and may be important witnesses at any subsequent trial or inquiry. There must be a balance between the requirement to gather evidence from survivors and the reluctance of some to remain at the scene of their distress. For example, prioritising information

might help, so that only names and addresses are taken from those anxious to leave, with further details being obtained later. Information will usually be gathered by police documentation teams at a survivor reception centre, a secure area to which all survivors who are uninjured or have only minor injuries should be taken.

## Friends and relatives

### Reception centres

**5.13** Experience has shown that many people will travel to the scene or to meeting points such as travel terminals if they believe their friends or relatives may have been involved in an emergency. If necessary, the police, in consultation with the local authority, will establish friends and relatives reception centres at suitable locations, to support the administration, interview and shelter of those concerned. These may be near the scene, in the area of the community affected or at arrival and departure points. Any commercial, industrial or other organisations concerned may also need to be consulted.

**5.14** The friends and relatives reception centres will be staffed by police, local authority staff and suitably trained voluntary organisations. The authorities should also consult and involve representatives of faith organisations whenever appropriate.

**5.15** Those responsible should give the fullest possible information to enquirers seeking news of people who might be affected, while taking care to preserve the privacy of the individual. Proper liaison and control must be in place to ensure that information is accurate, consistent and non-contradictory. General enquirers must know how to obtain information.

**5.16** Friends and relatives who may be feeling intense anxiety, shock or grief, need a sympathetic and understanding approach. Experience has shown that one of the most effective ways of supporting next of kin is to use a police family liaison officer together with a trained support worker for each family. The control of access should aim to prevent uninvited media representatives or onlookers from disturbing those inside.

## Family assistance centres

**5.17** Once the initial response to the emergency has ended, the local authority should lead the migration of the various support structures into a multi-agency family assistance centre. Its fundamental purpose is to act as a singular focus ('one-stop-shop') for survivors, relatives and all those impacted by the disaster, through which they can access support, care and advice. In extreme cases this function may endure for an extended period of years.

## Police casualty bureaux

**5.18** In many emergencies, establishing the identity and whereabouts of people will be a critical issue. The purpose of a police casualty bureau is to provide a central contact and information point for gathering and distributing information about individuals who have been, or are believed to have been, involved in an incident. For the purposes of the bureau, a 'casualty' may be defined as 'any person who is directly involved in, or affected by, the incident'. This will include survivors, evacuees and the deceased.

**5.19** A police casualty bureau has three fundamental tasks:

- a) obtain relevant information regarding persons involved or potentially involved;
- b) assess and process that information; and
- c) provide accurate information to relatives and friends, the investigating and identification officers and HM Coroner (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland).

**5.20** When a casualty bureau is required, its early establishment is essential. It will typically be a consideration following declaration of a major incident, although the level of authority needed will differ between police forces. Without such a facility, calls from concerned friends and relatives may swamp control centres, with the potential to inhibit severely the management of the response to the incident. Once the bureau is activated and able to receive calls, the media will publicise a dedicated telephone number.

**5.21** The bureau telephone numbers must also be passed as soon as possible to telephone network controllers, control rooms for the other emergency services and the local authority (or authorities), receiving hospital switchboards, and embassies

(if appropriate). These measures will reduce delays and confusion caused by embassies and relatives ringing round for information.

**5.22** As part of this process the police will send documentation teams to each receiving hospital, the mortuary, survivor reception centre(s) and, possibly, rest centre(s), as well as to relatives. Good co-ordination of this activity is essential to avoid unnecessary duplication of visits, particularly to next of kin.

**5.23** In order to fulfil its role, the casualty bureau will:

- a) receive enquiries from the general public and file missing person (MISPER) reports;
- b) record details (including their whereabouts) of survivors, evacuees, the injured and deceased through reports from police documentation teams, receiving hospitals, survivor reception centres, rest centres, friends and relatives reception centres, etc;
- c) formulate a comprehensive list of missing persons;
- d) collate data to support identification of persons involved;
- e) liaise with the ante mortem team; and
- f) inform enquirers (by the most appropriate means) of the condition and location of these persons.

**5.24** An important factor in the way the casualty bureau operates is that the people who receive information and record enquiries from the general public (the incident enquiry unit) are not involved in the collation and matching processes. They are therefore unable to give out information to enquirers. A separate unit will pass on messages on behalf of casualties and operate a call-back service to enquirers when matches have been made, but not in the case of fatalities.

**5.25** It is essential that emergency call centres operated by companies or organisations (including Category 2 responders as specified in Parts 3 and 4 of the Act) should link closely with police casualty bureaux. This will reduce the risk of error, inaccuracy and duplication and minimise the potentially adverse impact on relatives and friends. Those links should be identified and developed during the preparation and planning processes, and then tested on exercises.

**5.26** In the case of fatalities, details are passed to the Identification Commission. The bereaved will then be informed (see 'Dealing with fatalities' below).

## Air Accidents and the Emergency Procedures Information Centre

**5.27** In the event of an air crash, the Emergency Procedures Information Centre (EPIC) at Heathrow may open. This is managed by British Airways. If so, EPIC's telephone number will be broadcast. Once open, EPIC acts as a central airline information co-ordinating point. It collates information about reservations, next of kin and other relevant data, thereby supporting the work of the police and the coroner.

**5.28** If foreign nationals are thought to have been involved, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will refer any enquiries from foreign consulates, embassies or high commissions to the casualty bureau. The police will, in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, inform the consular authorities of the death of any of their nationals. Ambassadors or high commissioners may wish to visit a disaster scene.

## Dealing with fatalities

**5.29** It is essential that the handling of issues surrounding fatalities is both efficient and sensitive. Dealing with fatalities during major emergencies must recognise the conflict between trying to satisfy:

- a) the full and proper legal requirements for enquiring into what happened; and
- b) the emotional and information needs of the bereaved relatives or friends of the deceased.

**5.30** Arrangements must also consider the welfare of those working with unusually high numbers of deceased and human remains.

## Procedural requirements

**5.31** The authority of HM Coroner is generally required before those who have been pronounced dead can be moved from the scene of the incident. Arrangements are then the responsibility of the police, who will act on behalf of the coroner to implement a body recovery plan.

**5.32** The police overall incident commander will appoint a Senior Identification Manager (SIM) to manage and co-ordinate all aspects concerning the identification of victims. The SIM will appoint a senior officer to be responsible for the recovery of the

deceased from the disaster site. This officer will formulate a recovery plan together with other relevant persons and agencies. This will include the coroner, the police senior investigating officer (SIO) and, where relevant, other investigative agencies.

**5.33** Bodies (or parts of bodies) should not normally be moved until a medical practitioner or paramedic has pronounced life extinct and endorsed the body label accordingly. This will involve issuing the victim with a unique reference number, which will remain constant throughout the identification process. The removal should take place in a systematic, structured and documented fashion. Exceptionally bodies may have to be moved beforehand to prevent loss or further damage to the deceased victim or to rescue or provide medical treatment for trapped survivors. If it is necessary to move bodies in an emergency, a record should be made of the location of the find and its removal. If possible, this should be supported by video or photographic evidence. The structured and documented recovery, including medical practitioner confirmation of death, should recommence at the earliest opportunity.

**5.34** The need to preserve evidence at the scene of a major emergency – including that of identifying the deceased – must be borne in mind. For this reason, valuables and other property should not be removed from the victim until arrival at the mortuary, and then only on the direction of the pathologist, where they will be documented in a structured fashion. It is also important not to make assumptions about ownership of property. Items found near to or underneath victims must not be recovered with the victim, but dealt with separately.

**5.35** Human remains may be taken first to a location designated as a body holding area. This should be under cover and protected from the public view for reasons of security, protection and sensitivity. A body-holding area should only be regarded as a temporary holding point between the site of retrieval and the designated mortuary.

**5.36** The usual practice is for bodies to be taken to a temporary mortuary for post-mortems to be carried out. It is the responsibility of the coroner's office to make arrangements for the transfer of bodies to the mortuary. This is co-ordinated by the police acting on behalf of the coroner's office, using vehicles belonging to undertakers or police, although military

transport may also be used for this task. It is essential to establish documented continuity in respect of each aspect of the recovery and transportation process.

**5.37** Temporary mortuary provision should be an inter-agency activity, with the local authority taking the lead. Health and Safety Regulations lay down a number of criteria for establishing a temporary mortuary.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the identification of suitable buildings, together with arranging the necessary logistical and administrative infrastructure, should form part of the pre-planning process. The plan should include storage and examination areas. It should identify separate areas for staff and the bereaved and cover access needs, ideally with separated approaches and facilities for the different groups.

**5.38** These arrangements should be reviewed periodically. There needs to be consultation with neighbouring authorities in order to reduce duplication of effort and to develop mutual support systems. Each area needs a clear plan with options to apply if numbers exceed accessible capacity. This entails checking provision in neighbouring areas, within the public system, the burial industry and in the NHS for access and flexibility. Local authorities will find it helpful to refer to *Guidance on Dealing with Fatalities in Emergencies*, issued by the Home Office (2004).

**5.39** The task of identifying the deceased is undertaken by an Identification Commission, made up of the supervising pathologist, police senior identification manager, police family liaison co-ordinator and specialists such as those in odontology, radiology and fingerprints. The coroner normally chairs the Identification Commission. The functions of the Identification Commission include the compilation of evidence which will lead to the positive identification of the deceased, and controlling the running of the mortuary.

**5.40** Communication arrangements must ensure that there are appropriate links between coroner and staff, the police (including family liaison officers) and the bereaved. Close links to the NHS arrangements are essential. Arrangements must do everything possible to prevent the possibility of multiple contacts and misidentification of fatalities and casualties.

When a positive identification has been made, it is generally the police who will inform the next of kin once the approval of the coroner has been given to do so. On occasions the next of kin may be part of the identification process.

## Information and sensitivity

**5.41** There is a need to cross-refer plans for temporary mortuaries with those for managing friends and relatives reception centres. Information arrangements must ensure that information for the bereaved is timely, honest, understandable and accurate. Information should enable relatives to make informed choices, and responding professionals should not make decisions on their behalf. It is extremely important to differentiate viewing a body for identification from viewing a body for grieving purposes.

**5.42** If the next of kin are involved in the identification process, they should normally be accompanied by a police family liaison officer and a support worker from the multi-agency crisis support team. When next of kin are informed of a death, it should be done in person with the family liaison officer and support worker acting as a team. Visual identification is not a scientific approach and mistakes have been made in the past. This can lead to increased trauma for the families involved, legal difficulties and embarrassment for professional individuals and/or agencies. It is best, therefore, to ensure accurate identification is achieved by using a combination of criteria. This may include fingerprints, dental and other medical records, and/or DNA profiles as appropriate. Families should never be allowed to view numerous bodies in the hope that they will make an identification.

**5.43** Relatives may also wish to view the body as part of the grieving process. This should only take place after the victim has been identified. It must be remembered that the decision to view an identified body is that of the family, not the police or any other individual/agency. Once the body is released by the coroner, it will be taken to the relevant undertaker, where premises are purposely designed for this activity. However, relatives may be anxious to view the body before then. Whatever the circumstances once the body has been identified, the family retain

<sup>1</sup> Advice is available from the Coroner's Officers' Association

the right to view. To prevent such viewing may not only be unlawful but may seriously impact on the grieving process. Medical staff, social services, religious leaders and independent advisers may provide them with information and support. Once again, it should be emphasised that honest information is to enable relatives to make informed choices, not to persuade them to take a particular course.

**5.44** If viewing is arranged at the temporary mortuary, suitable support from trained personnel should be available before, during and after. The police family liaison officer should view the body in advance. The officer should then provide the family with appropriate information about the state of the body in a sensitive and compassionate manner. This should include odour, colour, temperature and details of the nature and extent of any injuries. Prior to the family viewing, it may be appropriate to offer a photograph, if available, to prepare them and explain any injuries. The family should be asked if there is anything else they wish to know.

**5.45** Arrangements should ensure that:

- a) a detailed description of the layout of the mortuary is given to the family before attending;
- b) a separate viewing area is available within the temporary mortuary;
- c) access to the viewing area is not through the main temporary mortuary;
- d) only one body is viewed at a particular time;
- e) a suitable area is available where relatives can regain composure following the viewing;
- f) the body is presented in a manner which takes account of the wishes of the relatives with regard to the preservation of dignity for the deceased; and
- g) decisions as to whether it is appropriate to clean property or launder clothing are discussed with relatives (the police SIO, through the SIM, should also be consulted on the issue of cleaning – there may be evidential and/or health and safety aspects that will affect decisions concerning this issue).

**5.46** In planning an inquest, coroners' officers should give consideration to the bereaved on a number of issues:

- a) choosing a suitable venue;
- b) informing relatives of time and place, and the possible delaying of an opening if relatives need time to travel;

- c) privacy for the relatives and protection from media and public access; and
- d) suitable information on the processes involved so that relatives know what to expect.

**5.47** Anyone involved in responding to the needs of bereaved relatives should have an awareness of cultural, faith or religious sensitivities. Advice can be sought from appropriate faith, religious or ethnic groups on what is appropriate. It is still vital that no assumptions are made – relatives should be asked what is appropriate for them.

**5.48** There is a need for exercises to include testing of plans for dealing with fatalities. Lord Justice Clarke's report highlighted the need for joint training and exercises that will help provide an appropriate and sensitive service to relatives.

## Children

**5.49** Catering for the needs of children raises particular issues. The emotional effects on children are not always immediately obvious to parents or school staff. At times children find it difficult to confide their distress to adults, often because they know it will upset them. In some children the distress can last for months and may affect academic performance. Relatives and professionals who deal with children need to be aware of the range of symptoms that children may show after a major trauma. They should note any changes in behaviour and alert others as set out in contingency plans. There are a number of key issues to consider:

- a) The relaying of accurate information to children as well as adults is vital. Schools are particularly prone to rumour, which adds to distress.
- b) The families of children caught up in a tragedy need full and accurate information as quickly as possible.
- c) Formal debriefing meetings for both children and adults are a very important part of the rehabilitation process. Further information on the special arrangements needed when children are caught up in traumatic events are contained in the booklet *Wise Before the Event – Coping with Crises in Schools*.

**5.50** Working with children brings its own particular strains – arrangements must include the welfare needs of support workers.

## Faith, religious and cultural needs

**5.51** Any major emergency occurring in the United Kingdom is likely to involve members of faith, religious and ethnic minorities. Emergency services, local authorities and other responders should bear their needs in mind. In communities where this can be anticipated, suitable arrangements should be built into plans. In cases such as transport accidents it is more difficult to predict who will be affected, but planning should at least identify which organisations can provide help or advice and how to engage them.

**5.52** Some people may have language difficulties: help from translators and interpreters may therefore be needed. Any interpreters used should be aware of the principles of responding to major emergencies (and will need appropriate support afterwards). Particular religious requirements relate to medical treatment, hygiene, diet and places for prayer. Depending on the faith of the deceased or bereaved, there may also be concern about how the deceased are handled, and the timing of funeral arrangements.

**5.53** Various sections of the faith communities have well-established emergency arrangements. It is therefore important to integrate their requirements into general contingency planning as far as possible. Further advice on the particular needs of faith communities is available in *The Response of the Faith Communities to Major Emergencies: Some Guidelines*.

## Staff welfare

**5.54** Major emergencies place enormous demands on all involved in the response. Pressure of work may sometimes be sustained over long periods. There is a need to look after the physical and psychological welfare of staff in response organisations.

**5.55** Health and Safety at Work legislation requires all employers to follow safe working practices as far as reasonably practicable. There must be proper assessment of working conditions and of requirements for suitable equipment, protective clothing, etc.

**5.56** Other physical requirements include:

- refreshments at any response scene, especially to provide warmth or prevent dehydration;

- facilities for taking meals away from 'the front line';
- washing and changing facilities;
- medical and first-aid facilities;
- telephone and transport provision so people can keep home informed and get home as quickly as practical; and
- shifts of reasonable length and rotas that ensure proper rest.

**5.57** With regard to psychological welfare, management should consider the need for:

- proper briefing to ensure people know what is happening and what their contribution will be;
- honest information about what to expect where unpleasant or stressful tasks are involved;
- quiet space to prepare, unwind or think;
- someone to discuss experiences with, both at the time and afterwards;
- providing access to information on sources of help or support;
- information about what constitutes a normal reaction; and
- similar support and information for family or partners.

**5.58** It will be enough for many to talk through issues with their colleagues or peers, perhaps guided by a suitably trained or experienced person. Some, however, will require skilled professional help. All services should provide access to this in a way that ensures confidentiality and overcomes any cultural resistance.

**5.59** In areas of activity that are particularly harrowing it is important to advise recruits (be they professional or voluntary workers) of the nature of the work involved. Training and selection arrangements should aim to ensure that suitable staff are chosen, appropriate training is given and support is available.

## Memorial services or services of remembrance

**5.60** A memorial service provides an opportunity for those affected to share their grief with others. However, it often has an important national as well as local role and is likely to receive extensive media coverage. For these reasons it is important to consider the organisation and structure of such events very carefully, covering such aspects as timing,

invitations, representation and conduct. Planning for such occasions should involve all relevant faith communities, representatives of the bereaved, advisers on media coverage and security, the local community, dignitaries and those who provided different aspects of the response.

## Disaster appeals

**5.61** Whenever a disaster occurs, people often wish to contribute in some way. Even before any appeal has been launched, unsolicited donations are likely to be received by, for example, the local authority. Dealing with donations and accompanying letters will prove to be a time-consuming task and it will probably be seen to be preferable in every way to launch an appeal fund.

**5.62** Establishing an appeal fund can be a complex and sensitive task. Appeal fund management involves co-ordinating the handling of donations, weighing the arguments for and against charitable status, appointing independent trustees and eventually distributing funds to the appropriate beneficiaries – all of these activities are fraught with potential pitfalls. They require extensive research, planning and monitoring in order to maximise the response of the public. Advice is available from a number of sources, including the British Red Cross Disaster Appeal Scheme (United Kingdom).

## Evacuation

**5.63** In some circumstances it may be necessary to advise the public on whether they should evacuate a given area or stay put and shelter indoors. Such circumstances include risks to life or health from:

- a) release or threatened release of radioactive materials;
- b) release or threatened release of other hazardous substances;
- c) spread of fire;
- d) threat of explosion;
- e) damage caused by severe storms;
- f) threat from serious flooding; and
- g) threat of environmental contamination.

**5.64** The possible need for evacuation in the event of the release, or threatened release, of radioactive material is set out in *Arrangements for Responding to Nuclear Emergencies*.

**5.65** In the event of the release, or threatened release, of non-radioactive hazardous materials, additional information on the nature of the risk may be obtained from the Fire Service, from chemical data systems and other accredited sources. Currently emergency arrangements exist with the Meteorological Office to forecast the direction and spread of any chemical plume, using information provided from the scene together with remote telemetry.

**5.66** The Meteorological Office and/or regional weather centres issue severe weather warnings of severe storms or other adverse weather. In addition, the Meteorological Office issues to the police and to the Environment Agency warnings of abnormally high tides that could possibly lead to flooding. The Environment Agency is responsible for issuing to the public and other organisations flood warnings on specific rivers and coastline.

**5.67** It is normally the police who recommend whether or not to evacuate and define the area to be evacuated. Their recommendation will take account of advice from other agencies. The Fire Service will inform them about risks associated with fire, contamination and other hazards; ambulance and social services can advise on problems associated with moving people who are frail, disabled or at risk for any other reason. Local authorities can advise on the location of pre-designated rest centres and on other possible places of shelter within the area.

**5.68** The police can only recommend evacuation and have no power (except within the inner cordon in response to a terrorist incident) to require responsible adults to leave their homes. Past experience has shown that people with domestic pets may be unwilling to leave their homes unless arrangements include their pets.

**5.69** In deciding whether to evacuate or not, it is necessary to assess whether bringing people outdoors may put people at greater risk than leaving them where they are to shelter indoors. This is particularly important in the case of the release of hazardous substances, or where terrorist devices may be present. When planning for contingencies, building occupiers should seek professional advice on whether there are areas in the building where people can shelter safely. Such areas must be structurally robust and should be equipped with telephones, first-aid facilities, adjacent-toilet facilities and a water supply.

**5.70** The physical and organisational difficulties of large-scale evacuation should not be underestimated. There are particular problems in evacuating hospitals, prisons and nursing homes. Evacuation is usually a last resort owing to the length of time it takes to complete.

**5.71** However, when there is a decision to evacuate, evacuation assembly points should be set up near the affected area. If time permits, these should be signposted. People in the affected area should be advised to go to their nearest evacuation assembly point. People taking prescribed and other medications should be reminded to carry these with them, and particular attention needs to be paid to those with sensory impairment.

**5.72** Bearing in mind that evacuation may be at different times of day or night and from locations as different as homes, industrial complexes, shopping malls, venues, ports or airports among others, various methods can be used for warning and informing the public: loud-hailers, tannoy, mobile public address systems, radio or TV announcements, works sirens, display screens, scoreboards and monitors or various combinations of these methods.

**5.73** The police will, as far as is practicable, take steps to ensure the security of property left empty after evacuation. In the event of an extended evacuation, the local authority may have planned for, or have to consider, other security arrangements. These may involve a contractor.

**5.74** Arrangements for warning, evacuation and for securing property, must take account of any safety risks to emergency service and local authority personnel which arise from exposure to hazards.

**5.75** At the evacuation assembly point the dispersal of evacuees to survivor reception centres or rest centres must be co-ordinated. Reception and rest centres should maintain a comprehensive index of evacuees and their whereabouts. The police will need this information, initially for casualty bureau purposes. They may also need it later if they have to interview witnesses.

**5.76** In order to account for all evacuees from an affected area, it is important to encourage those leaving reception or rest centres to register their intended destination when they leave, whether they are returning home or staying elsewhere. Rest centres should be staffed by local authority personnel and trained volunteers, who can provide the appropriate mix of service and support.

# Chapter 6

## Information and the media

### Summary

This chapter concerns co-operation with the media at the scene of an emergency:

- Working successfully with the media at the time of an emergency – a key part of civil protection (paragraphs 6.1–6.6).
- Media arrangements at the scene of an emergency (paragraphs 6.7–6.20).
- A co-ordinated approach to communications in the recovery phase (paragraphs 6.26–6.29).
- Ensuing consistency in information provided to the public (paragraphs 6.31–6.46).

### Introduction

**6.1** Good public communication is vital to the successful handling of any incident and should be incorporated in all contingency planning. When an incident occurs the key communications objective will be to deliver accurate, clear, timely information and advice to the public so they feel confident, safe and well informed.

**6.2** The news media (broadcasting, print and text services) remain the primary means of communication with the public in these circumstances. Websites are also increasingly being used to provide a further source of more detailed information and advice for the public, in particular for those at work or who have no immediate access to television or radio during the day.

### Working with the media

**6.3** There have been considerable changes in the news media in recent years with the development of 24-hour rolling news and the advent of multiple channels provided through cable and satellite connections, plus 24-hour news websites. An incident such as the Morecambe Bay cockle pickers tragedy, for example, can attract worldwide media interest within hours. Advances in technology mean

that live interviews, pictures and reports can now be sent direct from the scene of an incident via a mobile phone as the event is unfolding. They may come from members of the public making direct contact with media channels even before journalists have arrived. These developments mean there will be a constant requirement from the media for accurate, timely and up-to-date information. Where it is not provided, rumour and disinformation will flourish.

**6.4** The Media Emergency Forum (MEF) and, since their establishment in 2003, increasingly the Regional MEFs (RMEFs), have been working with the media to establish what arrangements are required to ensure the delivery of information to the public in an emergency. Initiatives such as the BBC's *Connecting in a Crisis* guide are also designed to ensure their own local radio station producers have established appropriate contacts with emergency planners, the police and other key organisations in their localities.

**6.5** A protocol on the delivery of urgent public safety information has also been agreed with national broadcasters.

**6.6** The purpose of this chapter is to identify some of the technical and practical issues that will arise for those working with the media in an emergency.

## Providing assistance to the media at the scene of an incident

**6.7** In many situations it will be the police – as co-ordinators of the response at and around an incident site and with their particular responsibility for criminal investigation – with whom the media will need to liaise first. Studies undertaken for MEF have indicated that upwards of 200 media representatives can be expected to turn up at the site of a major emergency within an hour of it happening, and this can swell to 1,000 or more from all over the world within 24 hours. They will require a range of support services from feeding to sanitation facilities and broadcasters in particular have a need for parking space for their satellite trucks.

## Control of access to the emergency scene

**6.8** Controlling access to the incident site itself is a matter for the police, put in place whenever practical. Restricting access aims to allow rescue services to carry out their work unhindered and to preserve evidence at what may be the scene of a crime. Decisions on the extent of the cordon need to be taken quickly and include consideration of the media's need to be able to film and report what is happening at the site.

**6.9** Helicopters and/or 'cherry pickers' – hoist-mounted remote cameras – may well be quickly deployed by the media seeking overview of the site. Decisions on control of airspace and overflight should therefore be an early consideration.

## Establishing a media liaison point

**6.10** A media liaison point is a designated point close to an emergency scene, usually (but not always) outside the outer cordon erected by the police around an incident site. This serves as the rendezvous point for media representatives where their bona fides can be checked and from where they may gain controlled access to the site itself for the purposes of filming, photography and news reporting.

## Nominating a media liaison officer

**6.11** The swift attendance at the scene of an experienced media liaison officer (MLO) (likely to be from the police) should ease pressure from the media. It is vital that this person quickly establishes a procedure for dealing with media requests and for regularly briefing them on developments. Rumour and conjecture will flourish in a vacuum and it is far better that the MLO gains the trust and confidence of the media by providing regular updates on events even if there is little new to say.

## Establishing credibility with the media

**6.12** Demonstrating awareness of their need to meet copy deadlines or broadcast 'live' reports will assist the MLO in establishing credibility with the media at the scene. This is important as he/she may need to seek the media's co-operation in, for example, organising pooled access to the incident site for filming or broadcasting urgent appeals for blood donors or details of evacuation arrangements.

## Pooling arrangements

**6.13** Access to the incident site for the purpose of filming, television and stills pictures and reporting what has happened may have to be limited either because of the physical limitations or security considerations at the scene or because of the numbers of media representatives wanting access. Such a decision is never going to be popular and should be taken only when absolutely necessary. One way to resolve this is by seeking media co-operation in nominating and agreeing members for a 'pool'. A 'pool' might, for example, comprise one TV crew, one news agency such as the Press Association, a photographer and a radio reporter. Their pooled coverage is then made available simultaneously to all the other media organisations. Additional thought may also need to be given to meeting the particular needs of foreign media organisations (including providing them with accreditation where necessary.)

## Requirement for an emergency media centre

**6.14** A decision will also need to be taken quickly about the requirement for establishing an emergency

media centre. Where possible, the media should be consulted on this. (If the site does not work for them they will not use it.) The requirement will obviously depend on issues such as the potential longevity, scale and seriousness of the incident or possibly multiple incidents. Issues such as the need for accreditation of large numbers of foreign media, the ready availability of suitable locations – including power and IT facilities – and the opportunities for media access to the site(s) themselves will need to be considered.

**6.15** In many cases a forward briefing point with good views over the incident site and regular briefings may well be sufficient for the media's needs.

### Regular briefings from senior personnel involved in the recovery operation

**6.16** Arrangements should also be made for the media to receive regular briefings from and interviews with senior police officers, fire and ambulance officers and representatives of other key agencies involved, such as transport companies and local authorities. This can best be facilitated in a large covered space where a raised dais and microphone facilities are available. This will ensure more control over the proceedings and a less stressful environment.

**6.17** While facts may be scarce initially, the media will welcome an honest appraisal of what is 'known' at the time and an account of what is being done, for example, to free trapped people. This should be backed up with a commitment to provide new information as soon as it is available. There should be no speculation on causal factors or half promises which raise expectations. Limitations on the release of information, where this is necessary to avoid prejudicing a possible criminal prosecution, should also be explained.

**6.18** Press releases and briefings should be released in electronic form as soon as possible, for distributing to the media, local authorities and emergency services' press offices, and for posting on emergency websites like UK Resilience.

### Interviews with survivors and their families

**6.19** The media will be keen to obtain interviews with survivors and their families. While this may be a cathartic experience for individuals in the long run, many will feel too shocked and distressed to give interviews in the immediate aftermath of an incident. The first consideration should always be the well-being of the individual. However, if a survivor, relative or friend is willing and able to speak briefly at a press conference or give an interview, it will certainly relieve pressure on all concerned. They will need support and advice from press officers from involved organisations in preparing what they are going to say and in dealing with any follow-up enquiries from the media.

**6.20** Strenuous efforts should also be made to shield survivors and their families from aggressive pursuit by less responsible members of the media. At its worst, this activity may include harassment, invasion of privacy, intrusion into grief and shock, unwanted involvement of relatives and friends and interviewing or photographing children.

### Release of casualty figures

**6.21** Great care should be taken to ensure that no information about individual casualties, or premature or uncorroborated estimates of the numbers of casualties, is released until details have been confirmed. Names should never be released until next-of-kin have been informed. In general, this information will only be confirmed by the emergency services involved. It may be necessary to establish a casualty bureau for the purposes of co-ordinating and sifting this information. In briefing the media about this and providing contact details and so on, it should be made clear that the bureau's role is to **receive** information, not divulge it.

### Establishing an emergency call centre

**6.22** Where it is deemed necessary to establish an emergency call centre for the public to seek further information, that number should be given urgently to the local media to broadcast/publish. The call centre's role – and the information it can and more importantly **cannot** provide – should be made very clear. Its role should be clearly distinguished from that of the casualty bureau.

## Decontamination procedures

**6.23** If there is a need to decontaminate victims at the scene, the media will require clear and urgent briefing on the procedures involved. (Apart from anything else, media employers have a duty of care to their own staff.)

## Assistance from the Government News Network (GNN)

**6.24** The Government News Network (GNN) should be regarded as a prime resource to send experienced press officers to the scene (at no cost for the first 24 hours) and should be contacted at the earliest opportunity, either direct through the Regional Director or through the 24-hour emergency helpline (02089 383560). The GNN have an initial response IT capability in each office and will attend with basic equipment to set up a forward base. Their initial role will be to support the emergency services and all other Category 1 and 2 responders. As the incident develops, assistance can range from helping to staff a media centre to acting as liaison officers with the lead government department (see Chapter 7) and handling VIP visits.

## Controlling mobile phone communications

**6.25** One option open to those controlling access to an emergency (normally the police) is to invoke ACCess OverLoad Control (ACCOLC) for cellular radio telephones if phone lines in the area are in danger of becoming overloaded. Under this procedure, telecommunications providers will manage the networks to ensure priority of access is given to those organisations who are ACCOLC registered. However, once a line is open, it cannot be closed. It is important to remember that invoking ACCOLC may be a two-edged sword: non-registered users, who may nonetheless be important to the emergency in question, may not be so easily contactable once ACCOLC is invoked. Anyone who is likely to be nominated as an MLO must have immediate access to an ACCOLC-registered phone.

## Establishing a co-ordinated approach to communications

**6.26** As the emergency develops and moves into the recovery phase (in a major emergency this may not be for some days), there will be a requirement for a more comprehensive media response organisation. This should be headed by a public relations (PR) manager, ideally with previous crisis experience. It is essential that this person, who may come from the police or the local authority or other key stakeholder, must have sufficient seniority and personal authority to take decisions and command respect. He/she must be fully involved in the strategic decision-making arrangements for handling the emergency.

## Role of emergency PR manager

**6.27** The emergency PR manager (and their team) should oversee all aspects of the media response. Typically this would include:

- a) activities at the media liaison point;
- b) arrangements for the media to visit any scene, including transport arrangements where events have occurred in a remote location;
- c) management of a media centre when/if this is established;
- d) monitoring of likely media activities related to the emergency but at locations remote from the primary scene;
- e) monitoring of media coverage;
- f) support for those who choose to be interviewed and protection of the privacy of those who do not wish to be interviewed;
- g) participation in/management of any discussions/negotiations with the media not to broadcast certain details for the time being, or indeed to broadcast specific details (eg during hijack situations or kidnap negotiations);
- h) liaison with central government communication arrangements (eg News Co-ordination Centre (NCC)); and
- i) provision of communications policy advice to the Strategic Co-ordinating Group handling the emergency (eg 'Gold').

## Requirements in an emergency media centre

**6.28** MEF has made recommendations on the basic requirements for an emergency media centre. Considerable additional work has also been done through London Resilience, and increasingly through the RMEFs, to identify suitable locations and address issues such as the staff required to run such an operation 24/7. Experienced press officers – from all the organisations involved – and also support staff will be required. At the request of the lead government department, trained staff from the GNN can be employed to supplement departmental resources.

**6.29** There are several benefits to establishing a proper media centre for the duration of the emergency. These include a central focus for locating the media; for accrediting potentially large numbers including media coming from overseas; for organising regular briefings and providing facilities for press conferences and interviews. It will also provide a central point for assessing media coverage, co-ordinating information flows from all the organisations involved and, if necessary, establishing a central press office. In the event of a widespread or multi-site disaster, a single media centre may serve as a focus for several media liaison points at different locations.

## Remote handling

**6.30** Experience has shown that in some disasters media attention focuses on communities and individuals living many miles from the scene, but who are seen as having a direct link to the tragedy – perhaps because the victims came from there. Action will be required to ensure media facilities and requirements in this area are also covered by the PR manager's central co-ordination arrangements.

## Ensuring consistency in information provided to the public

**6.31** The demand for information from both the media and the public may, initially at least, threaten to overwhelm the capacity of individual organisations' public relations teams involved in the emergency. Each organisation should ensure that its

emergency media plans set out clearly the steps required to keep the public informed. This will include maintaining up-to-date lists of key contacts, previously agreed procedures for seeking additional communications and administrative support from other organisations, and a 'grab-bag' containing basic equipment and supplies. If help from the GNN is required, their press officers will arrive with a basic kit of laptop computer/modem and auxiliary equipment such as Ordnance Survey maps, hard hats and torches.

**6.32** Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Category 1 responders are required to make arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency. This is fully covered in the guidance to Part 1 of the Act.

**6.33** These arrangements may best be set out in a protocol which has been agreed locally or through the RMEF or directly with the BBC through its Connecting in a Crisis initiative.

**6.34** Under other existing legislation such as the COMAH Regulations (Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1998) and the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 (REPPPIR), there is a duty to provide information to the public. REPPPIR specifically aims to ensure that the members of the public likely to be, or actually affected by, a radiation emergency, are given appropriate information. It is the duty of the site operator to prepare and disseminate prior information; local government is required to ensure that information is received by those actually affected by an emergency. The arrangements to provide this information should be integrated into the wider media response plan.

## Role of the News Co-ordination Centre

**6.35** In the event of a crisis, emergency or major incident, the NCC will be established by the Cabinet Office Communications Group Operations Unit. The NCC supports the lead government department in their communications management of the overall incident.

**6.36** The nature of the NCC's support will depend on the circumstances, but it could take the form of

securing extra staff to work in the lead department or in an operations centre; helping to compile and distribute briefing material; designing and establishing websites; forward planning; collation of requests for ministerial interviews; and preparing media assessments. Additionally, the NCC could provide a central press office to co-ordinate the overall government message. News co-ordination centres may also be set up regionally by using the GNN.

**6.37** The UK Resilience website forms part of the NCC operation. The site can be updated at any time and new material put online within half an hour. The site is used for emergency information, instructions to the public on what action to take, ministerial statements, briefings and guidance documents. It could also carry evacuation details, addresses of rest centres and supply depots.

**6.38** The web team monitors news sources and feeds for breaking news and additional information, and liaises with other government departments' web teams to co-ordinate messages and share information.

## Working with the RMEFs/MEF

**6.39** The Media Emergency Forum is an ad hoc and voluntary group of senior media editors, government representatives, local authority emergency planners, blue light services and private industry set up in the late 1990s to consider media issues arising from civil emergencies and, since 11 September 2001, from terrorist attacks.

**6.40** Regional MEFs were established in 2003 and are increasingly forging similar links, based on the establishment of networks and trust, at the local and regional level. These forums are a mechanism that can be used during an emergency to explore communication issues with the media under the Chatham House rule.<sup>1</sup> Where necessary, media briefings on salient issues can be urgently arranged. After an event, debriefs can help to identify where communications could have been handled better. Co-ordination is achieved through the GNN, who act as the secretariat to the RMEFs. Their links with all

regional stakeholders, including the regional and national media, will ensure that the widest possible consultation takes place. Here again GNN staff can be engaged to assist with the development of the exercise scenarios or help with the arrangements for the exercise itself.

**6.41** Consideration should be given to regular testing and exercising of crisis communication plans to identify problem areas and ensure lessons are learned.

## Co-ordination of information flow among stakeholders

**6.42** A key issue following any emergency is to try and ensure consistency in the information provided by the different agencies involved. In the confusion which often follows an incident it can be a difficult and lengthy process to establish clear, concise and accurate facts and figures about what has happened. However, the media will have an insatiable appetite for these details and will continue to seek information wherever and from whomever they can.

**6.43** It will obviously cause unnecessary pain and alarm if the information provided by different agencies is inconsistent and great care should be taken to avoid this. Inconsistency will also lead to a loss of confidence in the responders handling the incident.

**6.44** Establishing cross-agency co-ordination of information at an early stage in an incident is a key step in seeking to avoid unnecessary confusion and inconsistency. This may include production and distribution of a core media brief for distribution among key stakeholders, central co-ordination of interviews or even a centralised press office. It could also mean provision of additional press officers by one agency to support the efforts of another agency which may be coming under particular pressure.

**6.45** The UK Resilience (UKR) website and other sites can be a central resource for information on all aspects of the emergency, including statistics,

<sup>1</sup>The Chatham House Rule is used to facilitate both free speech and confidentiality at meetings. Meetings may be held 'on the record' or under 'the Chatham House Rule'. In the latter case, it may be agreed with the speaker(s) that it would be conducive to free discussion that a given meeting, or part thereof, should be strictly private. When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information or opinions disclosed to them providing they do not refer to the meeting or the speaker

response figures, maps and graphics, and instructions (as in the foot-and-mouth outbreak in 2001). The UKR site and local sites (eg Devon & Cornwall Police in the Boscastle flooding in 2004) can provide information to the local area and to the wider world, including relatives and friends elsewhere in the UK and abroad.

**6.46** The UKR site can also be used to broadcast emergency plans and to transmit alerts and warnings. As the picture changes, it can provide detailed background briefing about the reason for the emergency, and can be a resource for newspapers and broadcasters in the UK and around the world.

## Visits by VIPs

**6.47** Visits by VIPs, which will be co-ordinated by the police, can lift the morale of those affected as well as those who are involved with the response. A government minister may make an early visit to the scene or areas affected, not only to mark public concern but also to be able to report to Parliament on the response. A government minister visiting the scene may also be accompanied by local MPs. This would be arranged through the minister's private office. It is possible that the scale of the disaster may, in addition, prompt visits by a member of the Royal Family and/or the Prime Minister. Local VIP visitors may include the Lord Lieutenant and/or High Sheriff, religious leaders, local MPs, mayors, local authority leaders and other elected representatives. If foreign nationals have been involved, their country's Ambassador, High Commissioner or other dignitaries may also want to visit key locations.

**6.48** Visits to the scene of an emergency need to take account of the local situation and the immediate effects on the local community. It may be inappropriate for VIP visitors to go to a disaster site while rescue operations are still going on, particularly if casualties are still trapped. VIP visits should not interrupt rescue and life-saving work and the police must be consulted about the timing of visits.

**6.49** VIP visits will inevitably cause some disruption and visitors will want this to be kept to a minimum. The additional need for security may also cause a problem. However, there are also dividends to be gained from such visits as they may boost the morale

of those involved, including the injured and the emergency services, and give an opportunity to place on record public gratitude for what has been done.

**6.50** The emergency services are experienced at handling VIP visits in normal circumstances and many of the usual considerations will apply to visits to a disaster site. However, it may be necessary to restrict media coverage of such visits, in which case pooling arrangements may be made.

**6.51** Visiting ministers and other VIPs will require comprehensive briefing before visiting the site and will require briefing before any meetings with the media.

**6.52** VIPs are likely to want to meet those survivors who are well enough to see them. It will be for the hospitals to decide, on the basis of medical advice and respect for the wishes of individual patients and their relatives, whether it is appropriate for VIPs and/or the media to visit casualties. If the media cannot have access to wards, VIPs can still be interviewed afterwards at the hospital entrance about how patients and medical staff are coping. Such VIP visits are best managed by the PR team of the 'host' venue in close consultation with the police.

## Sustainability

**6.53** Major emergencies place enormous demands on all involved in the response. Media interest, particularly if it is international, can create pressure throughout a 24-hour period, and careful planning of staggered handovers between shifts is essential. Chief Constables and local authority chief executives will wish to take the sustainability of the level of response to the media into account and seek mutual aid accordingly. The pooling of resources in a joint media centre may be helpful in this respect. This relates not only to operational personnel but also to those providing administrative and specialist skills, eg in website technology.

**6.54** In the much longer term, experience has also shown that media interest will be rekindled on the anniversary of events, and provision may need to be made to consider how such occasions are handled.

## Media debrief

**6.55** Where there has been a considerable amount of media attention there will be inevitable strains between the media and emergency service interests. There is much to be gained by inviting senior media representatives to meet with senior members of the emergency services some weeks after a disaster to discuss how both sides saw the way information was provided, and to identify any ways in which arrangements can be improved in future. RMEFs can provide the mechanism for a full and frank exchange of views in a mutually supportive environment. (Case studies and examples of good practice may be found in the MEF/RMEF annual report.)

# Chapter 7

## The Government Offices for the Regions

### Summary

- The Government Offices (GOs) offer an easy way for local responders to link into central government (paragraphs 7.1–7.2).
- The work of the GOs is co-ordinated by Regional Resilience Teams (paragraphs 7.3–7.4).
- GOs are increasingly the first people government departments contact for briefing on an emergency and can ensure more effective communications between national and local levels (paragraphs 7.5–7.8).
- GOs have a particular focus on consequence management issues and can provide advice on ministerial and VIP visits and communications issues (paragraphs 7.9–7.12).
- GOs will provide support for Regional Civil Contingencies Committees (paragraph 7.13).

## Role of the Government Offices in an emergency

**7.1** The Government Offices (GOs) can provide a useful link to central government during an emergency and they will often be the first people that government departments turn to for a situation report on many incidents. The GOs are likely, therefore, to have a role to play in any emergency which could generate ministerial interest or national or regional press coverage. Government departments will also use GOs to cascade information and guidance to local responders. The GOs also have substantial knowledge and experience of the working of central government and so provide a valuable first port of call for advice and guidance.

**7.2** GOs only need to become involved in the response to an event where they can genuinely add value. In most of the emergencies that local responders will face, the involvement of the GOs will be limited to gathering information to brief the centre. However, the more significant the incident, and the more ministerial and press interest it generates, the more the GOs will be able to provide support and assistance.

## Role of the Regional Resilience Teams

**7.3** A Regional Resilience Team (RRT) has been established in each of the GOs to co-ordinate the response of the whole GO. The teams are led by a senior official and supported by four to five staff. (In London the team is larger, with a significant number of secondees from a range of organisations.) The RRTs will be the first point of contact for any resilience issues in normal working hours. GOs also have arrangements in place to ensure they can be contacted on a 24/7 basis.

**7.4** The scale or duration of many emergencies will mean that the resources of the RRT are quickly exhausted. In such cases, RRTs will be able to draw on other staff and expertise from within the GO and on the resources of RRTs in other regions, if available.

## Liaison with central government

**7.5** There are already well-established lines of communication between local and national levels in some areas. This is particularly the case where responding agencies have departmental sponsors – for example the Environment Agency has direct lines of communication with Defra during flooding incidents. However, these lines of communication are generally agency-specific and departments are increasingly turning to GOs to take a multi-agency and cross-departmental view of an event and so complement such arrangements and add value.

**7.6** In many smaller-scale events, particularly where ministers show an interest, government departments will approach the RRTs for information. The RRTs will, therefore, request situation reports from local responders. Using the GOs as the main point of contact will reduce the risk of duplicated requests from different government departments. Local responders can also use the GOs as a first port of call for requests for advice or assistance from central government.

**7.7** In order to gather information to be fed back to government departments, it may be appropriate for the GO to place a Government Liaison Officer within the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG). Local responders should, therefore, consider issuing an invitation to the relevant GO whenever a multi-agency SCG is established. In counter-terrorist incidents there are arrangements for a Home Office-led Government Liaison Team to be activated. Where this is the case, the GO officer will be co-located with that team. Local and regional responders need to agree mechanisms for alerting, mobilising and information sharing between each other.

**7.8** When the national emergency co-ordination arrangements are activated, GOs will provide situation reports for the Central Situation Cell, copied to the lead government department and any other government department with a significant interest. (See also Chapter 8 on Regional Civil Contingencies Committees.)

## Consequence management

**7.9** Where the scale and nature of an incident are such that the effects are likely to be felt outside the

immediate locality or to overwhelm the local response, or have the potential to do so, GOs can provide help and support consequence management by linking with national and regional agencies. Where, in terrorist incidents, a Home Office-led Government Liaison Team is established at the SCG, the GOs will form part of the Consequence Management Cell.

## Ministerial and VIP support

**7.10** The GOs have a great deal of experience in arranging ministerial and other VIP visits and will be able to give advice and guidance on such visits. In addition, ministers' offices may task the GOs directly to co-ordinate the arrangements for visits. In this case, the GOs will consult with local partners to establish the local situation, minimise disruption and discuss issues such as security, briefing, etc.

## Media and communication

**7.11** The GOs work closely with the Government News Network in the regions and, with their links to government departments, they will receive national statements and press briefings. They can, therefore, help local responders to ensure that a co-ordinated and coherent message is given to the public.

**7.12** In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to have a spokesperson for the region as a whole. In this event, one option could be the Regional Director of the GO who is authorised to give media interviews.

## Support for Regional Civil Contingencies Committees

**7.13** Where events justify the setting up of a Regional Civil Contingencies Committee (see Chapter 8), the RRT will take the lead in:

- a) arranging a location for meetings;
- b) establishing video/teleconferencing links when appropriate;
- c) drawing up agendas;
- d) circulating papers and information to committee members as necessary; and
- e) providing the formal record of committees' discussions and decisions.

# Chapter 8

## Regional Civil Contingencies Committees

### Summary

- Regional Civil Contingencies Committees (RCCCs) are intended as a means of co-ordinating the response to an emergency at a regional level. They are likely to be convened only very rarely and only where they can add value to a response (paragraphs 8.1–8.5).
- While the detailed role of the RCCC will vary according to the nature of the emergency, generic aspects of that role can be identified (paragraph 8.6).
- RCCCs will not supersede existing command and control structures and will observe the principle of subsidiarity – the building blocks of response will remain at the local level (paragraph 8.7).
- RCCCs are likely to prove particularly useful in wide-area, high-impact, rising tide emergencies where the deployment of scarce resources can be co-ordinated regionally and a fully informed network of responders and affected organisations created (paragraphs 8.8–8.9).
- RCCC membership will depend on the emergency but will in principle be similar to that of the Regional Resilience Forum (RRF) (paragraphs 8.10–8.14).
- RCCCs will be able to meet at one of three levels: prior to an emergency, during an emergency, or when special legislative measures have been taken (paragraphs 8.15–8.21).
- RCCCs will be able to be convened in three ways: at the request of a local Strategic Co-ordinating Group, at the behest of the lead government department, or at the request of a member of the RRF (level 1 only) (paragraphs 8.22–8.25).

## Overview – what is a Regional Civil Contingencies Committee?

**8.1** Most emergencies are dealt with by local responders at a local level. This has always been, and will continue to be, the norm for responding to emergencies. However, recent experience has highlighted that there may be very exceptional circumstances when the response to an emergency would benefit from co-ordination at a regional level. Such circumstances could include where the local response, including locally agreed mutual aid arrangements, is overwhelmed, or where an emergency is affecting the majority of localities within a region.

**8.2** Although it is anticipated that such circumstances are likely to occur only very rarely, there are clear benefits from having regional response structures in place so that they can be deployed as and when needed. Regional Civil Contingencies Committees (RCCCs) will be the key means of delivering the co-ordination of response at a regional level.

**8.3** An RCCC will be a multi-agency group including representatives from across the region of the emergency services, local authorities, the Government Office (GO) and others, as applicable. It will be charged with improving the co-ordination of the response to an emergency across a given region with a particular, but not exclusive, focus on consequence management and the recovery phase after an incident.

**8.4** Although they may have a similar membership, RCCCs will be distinct from Regional Resilience Forums (RRFs).<sup>1</sup> RRFs have no role in responding to emergencies, being instead focused on driving forward the development and co-ordination of planning for emergencies within each region.

**8.5** Local response structures are well developed and understood, and have been shown to work well in a wide variety of incidents. The development of an ability to co-ordinate response at a regional level in no way supersedes or replaces these tried and tested arrangements. The possibility of a regional response

to a crisis is simply another option available to Government and local responders alike. It is an option that will be used only where it can demonstrably add value.

## The role of the RCCC

**8.6** The precise role of an RCCC is likely to vary depending on the nature of the emergency at hand. However generic aspects of the role are likely to include:

- a) collating and maintaining a strategic picture of the evolving situation within the region, with a particular (but not exclusive) focus on consequence management and recovery issues;
- b) assessing whether there are any issues which cannot be resolved at a local level;
- c) facilitating mutual aid arrangements within the region and, where necessary, between regions to resolve such issues;
- d) ensuring an effective flow of communication between local, regional and national levels, including the co-ordination of reports to the national level on the response and recovery effort;
- e) raising to a national level any issues that cannot be resolved at a local or regional level;
- f) ensuring that the national input to response and recovery is co-ordinated with the local and regional efforts;
- g) guiding the deployment of scarce resources across the region by identifying regional priorities; and
- h) providing, where appropriate, a regional spokesperson.

**8.7** RCCCs will observe the principle of subsidiarity. It is recognised that local decisions should be taken at the local level. The RCCC will not interfere in local command and control arrangements unless specifically empowered to do so by emergency regulations (see Chapter 13). But where it exists, it will provide a mechanism for ensuring that local responders can be as fully informed as possible in the decisions they have to take. Where arrangements already exist for the co-ordination of mutual aid (eg the Police National Information Co-ordination Centre mechanism for police resources) the RCCC will complement such arrangements and add value by taking a multi-agency overview.

<sup>1</sup> See *Preparing for Emergencies*, Chapter 17

**8.8** Where convened, RCCCs will also inform the deployment of national resources. So, for example, an RCCC could take a view on the need for military aid and on priorities within the region for such aid. It could also be the conduit for putting such requests to the national level. However, as now, MoD will authorise the use of military aid and decisions on the deployment and direction of military staff and resources will remain with the normal Military Aid to the Civil Authorities command hierarchy.

**8.9** One of the key benefits of the RCCC structure will be in ensuring that the wider impacts of an emergency are highlighted and that all the agencies impacted by, and responding to, an emergency are both fully informed of the details of the response and able to feed into its development. RCCCs will thus, for example, be able to address the wider, non-health, impacts of an infectious disease outbreak within a region (such as the impact on key workers) and feed this back to the national level.

## Membership of RCCCs

### General

**8.10** As with RRFs, the core membership of the RCCC will be drawn from representatives of the emergency services, local authorities, central government departments and agencies with a regional presence (eg MoD, DH, the Health Protection Agency, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, etc); but other agencies such as voluntary organisations, utilities and transport operators could be invited, depending upon the circumstances.

**8.11** In the first instance, the RCCC will be chaired by the Regional Director of the GO (or their deputy). However, the Committee can agree another chair if the circumstances merit it (eg a Regional Director of Public Health, a senior police officer, a local authority chief executive, etc).

**8.12** The GO will provide specialist topic and geographical advice as well as secretariat support for the RCCC.

### London

**8.13** Unlike in other regions in England, many local responder organisations in London have boundaries

which align with those of the region. In London there is therefore little distinction between an RCCC and the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) (Gold). In an emergency the London Resilience Team would provide the GO representatives at the SCG and RCCC.

**8.14** In practice, particularly for immediate-impact emergencies, the group is likely still to be referred to as 'Gold' and will be chaired by the police. A formal RCCC is more likely to be convened for 'rising tide' events and in the recovery phase. In London, the RCCC (SCG) for a large-scale emergency would include representatives of the utilities and transport providers, as well as the wider health community, configured as cells to enable an efficient SCG.

## Types of RCCC

**8.15** It is anticipated that the RCCC meetings would take place at one of three levels.

### Level one

**8.16** Level one meetings would be convened in the phase prior to an emergency, where prior warning is available. Meetings would be held to review the situation, update local stakeholders, and establish the state of preparedness across the region. Examples could include where a significant human or animal disease outbreak seemed likely, or in advance of forecast extreme weather.

**8.17** It is anticipated that this will be by far the most frequent form of RCCC meeting.

### Level two

**8.18** Level two meetings will co-ordinate the response to an emergency across a region. They are likely to prove particularly useful in the consequence management effort and the recovery phase of an emergency.

**8.19** A level two RCCC could, for example, be convened in the event of a wide-area disruptive challenge affecting a large portion of a region. They might also be convened if a national response or national co-ordination of an event was required, such as during a fuel distribution crisis.

### Level three

**8.20** Level three meetings could only be called following the formal declaration of a decision to take special legislative measures under Part 2 of the Civil Contingencies Act.

**8.21** Level three meetings would be chaired by the Regional Nominated Co-ordinator (see Chapter 9). The role of the RCCC would be as under level two but with an additional focus on the implementation of any special legislative measures necessary to respond to the emergency in question.

## Triggers for the creation of an RCCC

**8.22** An RCCC will only be convened where it will add value to the response and recovery effort. It is unlikely, therefore, that an RCCC will be convened in the event of a single-site emergency (eg a conventional car-bomb attack) where the impact of the emergency is contained within a single locality. In these circumstances, even in the most severe event, there would be a direct line of communication between local and national level and a multi-agency Strategic Command structure would be created. In London, the multi-agency SCG is the RCCC so there will in effect be an RCCC for single-site incidents.

**8.23** An RCCC is more likely to be required where a number of local SCGs are established **within** a region and a need for the co-ordination of the response across the region has been identified.

**8.24** The RCCC response structure is likely to add particular value where there is an emergency with widespread effects and a non-police-led response eg severe weather, infectious disease outbreak, fuel shortages, etc. Regional co-ordination is likely to prove particularly beneficial in emergencies that unfold over a longer timescale and affect very wide areas – so-called ‘rising tide’ or ‘slow burn’ emergencies. Where circumstances dictate it may be appropriate to convene a ‘virtual’ RCCC via video or teleconferencing.

**8.25** An RCCC can be convened in three ways:

- a) at the request of a member of a local SCG, with the agreement of the GO;
- b) on the instructions of the lead government department to the GO; or
- c) at the request of a member of the RRF (level 1 only).

# Chapter 9

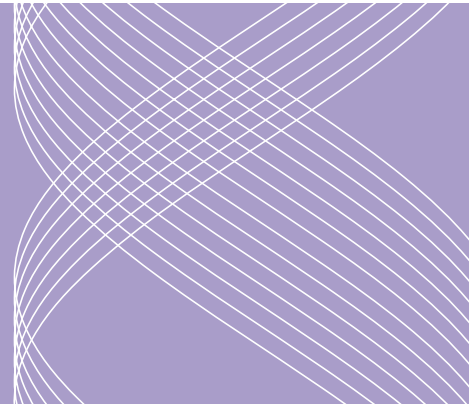
## Response arrangements in Scotland

### Summary

- The Scottish Executive is currently reviewing and restructuring its organisational arrangements and procedures in this field.
- A chapter will appear in the final guidance, matching the content of the chapters on Wales and Northern Ireland.

# Chapter 10

## Response arrangements in Wales



### Summary

- Welsh emergency response arrangements are based on the same principles that apply elsewhere in the United Kingdom (paragraphs 10.1–10.4).
- The Wales National Emergency Co-ordination Arrangements set out the structure for an integrated response to a wide-area emergency in Wales and provides a framework for the management of a Welsh national crisis (paragraph 10.5).
- The arrangements provide for this by allowing the Welsh Assembly Government to act as a conduit to/from the UK Government when appropriate (paragraphs 10.9–10.13).
- A Strategic Co-ordinating Group may be established in each Police Force area as and when necessary to determine the strategy of the response and the appropriate management structures to co-ordinate the local inter-agency response (paragraphs 10.6–10.8).
- The Welsh Assembly Government will establish an Emergency Co-ordination Centre (ECC) which will co-ordinate information and provide appropriate guidance/support to the services for which it is responsible (paragraphs 10.9–10.13).
- Once implemented, the national arrangements create a structure whereby information from across Wales will be analysed by the ECC. This will provide a national picture of the impact of the emergency which in turn can be used to advise decisions on the strategic management of the situation in Wales and be reported on a Welsh basis to the UK Government (paragraph 10.13).

## Emergency response arrangements in Wales

**10.1** The principles of emergency response in Wales are the same as for the rest of the United Kingdom. The response to major incidents in a particular area is normally made by the local emergency services.

**10.2** The roles and responsibilities for each agency are detailed within this chapter. They are tailored to meet the specific needs of Wales during a crisis. It is not the purpose of the arrangements to replicate national and local roles and responsibilities. Rather they outline the structures applicable to the interface between local arrangements and the Welsh Assembly Government. Local arrangements will decide the response to any particular event, whether potential or actual.

**10.3** The Wales National Emergency Co-ordination Arrangements seek to complement (not override) these procedures together with the existing joint agency procedures agreed in each police area.

**10.4** An important aspect of these arrangements is creating the ability to analyse the impact on Wales of any emergency or incident, and to provide coherent advice from the centre. The arrangements provide for this by allowing the Welsh Assembly Government to act as a conduit to/from the UK Government when appropriate.

## Wales National Emergency Co-ordination Arrangements

**10.5** The Wales National Emergency Co-ordination Arrangements set out the structure for an integrated response to a wide-area emergency in Wales. It reflects the principles contained within this volume and provides a framework for the management of a Welsh national crisis. The arrangements, which have been produced and agreed by the Wales Emergencies Working Group, provide a framework for the management of a Welsh national crisis and define the roles and responsibilities of agencies and committees on a pan-Wales and local basis. They currently only apply to a wide-area emergency and do not interfere with the multi-agency operational response to a local emergency. The generic nature of the arrangements provides flexibility and they can be adapted to form the basis of a response to any emergency affecting Wales.

## Strategic Co-ordinating Groups

**10.6** A Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) may be established in each Police Force area (South Wales, North Wales, Dyfed-Powys and Gwent) as and when necessary to determine the strategy of the response and the appropriate management structures to co-ordinate the local inter-agency response.

**10.7** To support any SCG a Local Strategic Co-ordination Centre can be established, containing representatives of all key Agencies, or having contact with representatives, on a 24-hour basis. The implementation of this will be determined locally. When activated, whilst initial contact will be via Police HQ Control Rooms, the Local Strategic Co-ordination Centre will provide a central point of contact for the co-ordination of the situation and for communication with the Welsh Assembly Government.

**10.8** Once established, the SCGs will commence gathering information from within their respective police areas detailing the impact of the emergency locally on emergency services, local authority services, utilities and other areas as appropriate. The information will be relayed to the Welsh Assembly Government Emergency Co-ordination Centre.

## Welsh Assembly Government Emergency Co-ordination Centre

**10.9** The Welsh Assembly Government will establish an Emergency Co-ordination Centre (ECC) at its offices in Cathays Park which can be linked with all agencies and Whitehall. The Assembly will co-ordinate information and provide appropriate guidance/support to the services for which it is responsible.

**10.10** The decision on whether to activate the national arrangements will be based on information from the agency or agencies with lead or major responsibilities in the emergency. The decision to escalate or de-escalate the pan-Wales response will be taken jointly by the main agencies concerned and the Welsh Assembly Government. These decisions will be cascaded to all agencies by the Welsh Assembly Government.

**10.11** There will be a flexible response to emergencies based on the circumstances that exist at the time. For example, in a major incident impacting primarily on a single Police area the Welsh Assembly Government will maintain a significant interest and will liaise with the SCG to review whether the establishment of the Welsh Assembly ECC could assist the response. Equally the Welsh Assembly could establish a co-ordinating centre in some circumstances to assist in managing its own aspects of response/involvement. SCGs and the Welsh Assembly ECC will advise each other of any significant de-escalation of their respective arrangements. Local plans will be activated and scaled down at any time according to circumstances and agreed local arrangements.

**10.12** During a crisis there may be a requirement for mutual aid/co-operation outside national boundaries. Whilst local arrangements may already encompass this, the ECC can act as a facilitating link, including acting as a central link with UK Government Departments.

**10.13** Once implemented, the national arrangements create a structure whereby information from across Wales will be analysed by the ECC at the Welsh Assembly Government. This will provide a national picture of the impact of the emergency which in turn can be used to advise decisions on the strategic management of the situation in Wales and be reported on a Welsh basis to the UK Government. In the same way, the structure will allow the cascading of information from central Government to agencies on the ground in Wales.

## Media Arrangements

**10.14** During an emergency, whether on a national scale or localised in impact, it is crucial to keep the public informed of developments and to provide relevant guidance and advice to the public, as accurately and speedily as possible. The press and broadcast media are the most effective way of communicating with the public as a whole. There is an obvious need to avoid confusion by aiming to achieve consistency in the messages provided to the public from official sources. This requires co-ordination between the press and information operations of all organisations involved.

**10.15** Management of the press and media at the site of the emergency is the responsibility of the lead agency (usually the police). The Welsh Assembly Government Press Office is responsible for providing an all Wales picture, providing public information and co-ordinating the media response of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Press Office would be able to offer support to the lead agency whenever local resources are stretched during a major or prolonged incident. An initial assessment should be made of the staffing requirement and any problems should be discussed urgently with the Press Office.

## Debriefing

**10.16** The Welsh Assembly Government will co-ordinate the debriefing exercise for the national arrangements by establishing a Working Group comprised of joint-agency representatives. If possible, this will be done within 28 days of standing down. This debrief will be specifically against the operation of these arrangements.

## Review Arrangements

**10.17** To ensure that the Wales National Emergency Co-ordination Arrangements remain effective, integrated validation and training exercises at a national level will be undertaken on a regular basis. The Welsh Assembly Government will facilitate these exercises.

# Chapter 11

## Response arrangements in Northern Ireland

### Summary

- Northern Ireland emergency response arrangements are based on the same principles that apply elsewhere in the United Kingdom (paragraph 11.1).
- Northern Ireland has its own government arrangements, details such as the identities of organisations which deliver emergency responses and the arrangements for inter-agency co-ordination differ from arrangements elsewhere in the United Kingdom (paragraph 11.1).
- Emergency response and co-ordination is carried out at local and sub-regional levels by the emergency services, District Councils and other public service organisations (paragraphs 11.2–11.6).
- At the Northern Ireland level, strategic responses are provided by the emergency services, the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland departments (paragraphs 11.7–11.9).
- Strategic co-ordination at the Northern Ireland level is delivered by the Central Emergency Management Group and the Crisis Management Group (paragraphs 11.11–11.18).
- Arrangements are in place to trigger strategic management co-ordination and convene meetings in response to actual or anticipated emergencies, and to scale up the level of co-ordination if the situation demands it (paragraph 11.10).
- The crisis management machinery is supported by the Central Emergency Management Unit, which will establish the Northern Ireland Information Management Centre if required (paragraphs 11.19–11.20).

## Emergency response arrangements in Northern Ireland

**11.1** The principles of emergency response in Northern Ireland are the same as for the rest of the United Kingdom. For example, the emergency services and the health service operate to UK-wide standards and protocols. What varies most in Northern Ireland is the name and type of organisation which delivers the emergency response, and the inter-agency co-ordination arrangements. Details of arrangements in Northern Ireland are available in the Central Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU) document.<sup>1</sup>

### Local and sub-regional arrangements

**11.2** The response to major incidents in a particular area is normally made by the local emergency services, who use standard command and control procedures. For emergencies happening on land, the Police would normally have responsibility for inter-agency co-ordination at local level, and would involve the other emergency services, other responding organisations and the District Council, as appropriate.

**11.3** Where the nature of an emergency is such that the emergency services do not provide the primary response, other public service organisations would respond according to their responsibilities. Inter-agency co-ordination would fall to the lead organisation locally for that type of emergency or to the District Council Chief Executive.

**11.4** The District Council Chief Executive would also undertake inter-agency co-ordination in circumstances where the emergency services or another lead agency have been co-ordinating the immediate response to an emergency but where there remains a need for co-ordination of recovery activities after the immediate response has been stood down.

**11.5** Some public services in Northern Ireland are organised at sub-regional level, for example the

Education and Library Boards and the Health and Social Services Boards. These sub-regional organisations will also respond to emergencies in their areas and will provide co-ordination where appropriate. For example, the Health and Social Services Boards will co-ordinate the public health response to disease outbreaks in their geographical areas.

**11.6** Responses and co-ordination at local or sub-regional level would normally be at operational and tactical level. If an emergency was sufficiently serious or widespread to require strategic-level response and co-ordination, this would bring into play arrangements across Northern Ireland.

### Northern Ireland strategic arrangements

#### Overview

**11.7** The strategic response to a very serious emergency would be provided by the emergency services (Northern Ireland has one Police Service, one Fire Authority and one Ambulance Service) and by the Northern Ireland departments and agencies. The Northern Ireland departments will respond in accordance with the lead department arrangements which mirror those governing Whitehall departments.

**11.8** The principles of strategic co-ordination of emergency response in Northern Ireland are the same as those elsewhere in the UK. However, the particular structures used for strategic co-ordination reflect the particular organisation of public services in Northern Ireland.

**11.9** Where an emergency is caused by actual or suspected criminal or terrorist activity, the strategic co-ordination of the direct response falls to the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Office. The Northern Ireland Administration is responsible for strategic co-ordination of the response to other types of emergency and for co-ordination of the consequence management response to any emergency. The following refers specifically to the strategic co-ordination arrangements of the Northern Ireland Administration.

<sup>1</sup> A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland is available on the CEPU website <http://cepu.nics.gov.uk> or by telephoning 028 9052 8862

### Triggers and activation of co-ordination

**11.10** If it becomes apparent that an emergency has occurred or is likely to occur, the department acting as the lead department may request the formation of an inter-departmental group to facilitate co-ordination of the response. To arrange this the department will contact the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

### Inter-departmental co-ordination

**11.11** Upon receiving the request to establish an inter-departmental group, CEPU will advise on the level and membership of the group and convene the group as agreed. The inter-departmental group may be the Central Emergency Management Group (CEMG) or the Crisis Management Group (CMG) depending on the circumstances at the time of the emergency. It may be that both groups will be formed either simultaneously or sequentially as the emergency response and the recovery progresses. The actions required for the functioning of each of these groups are detailed below.

### Central Emergency Management Group

**11.12** If the department and CEPU agree that the emergency situation is likely to affect the Northern Ireland infrastructure, including the delivery of public services, CEPU will convene a meeting of the CEMG. This group meets at Grade 5/Grade 7 level and comprises representatives of the Northern Ireland departments, emergency services, District Council Chief Executives, and other key agencies. Membership of the group would be tailored to the particular needs of the situation, and additional organisations would be invited where necessary.

**11.13** CEPU would normally arrange a meeting of the CEMG at 2–5 days' notice, but could arrange a next-day meeting on very urgent topics. CEPU would provide the chair and secretariat for the CEMG.

The department as the lead department will:

- a) report on the actions which it has already taken and any additional ones which will be required;
- b) identify key issues which need to be addressed, and any input/action which will be required from other organisations; and
- c) provide contact details for department staff dealing with the emergency, so enabling other

organisations to provide the necessary information to the department and to make inquiries or report any unexpected developments.

CEPU will:

- a) chair the meeting;
- b) work to achieve agreement on actions and responsibilities;
- c) report to OFMDFM top management, including the Head of the Civil Service, and OFMDFM ministers/the Secretary of State as appropriate;
- d) circulate notes or minutes afterwards confirming actions agreed and timescales;
- e) agree arrangements for any further meetings required;
- f) continue to liaise with the Lead Department between meetings and to circulate any additional information/requests to CEMG members; and
- g) circulate information to the Infrastructure Emergency Planning Forum (IEPF) on the developing situation and request information from the IEPF membership on the response of their organisations to the emergency.

Attending organisations will:

- a) assess their own situation in respect of the emergency, the likely effect on the delivery of their essential services and any information they have on the likely effects on the wider community, and report on these to the meeting;
- b) collect, collate and deliver information as requested by the lead department. This may be supplied to the department verbally or in writing at or after the meeting;
- c) agree the actions they will take to manage and co-ordinate the situation within their own areas of responsibility, in accordance with agreements reached at meetings; and
- d) provide appropriate contact information to the lead department and CEPU.

**11.14** As a result of CEMG meetings, working groups may be formed to deal with specific aspects of the situation. These would not necessarily be chaired by either CEPU or the lead department. Agreement would be reached at meetings on the most appropriate organisation to chair, though CEPU could facilitate working groups by making accommodation and contact information available.

## Crisis Management Group

**11.15** If the emergency was, or was expected to become, so serious that severe disruption to the community had occurred or was anticipated the lead department and CEPU would consider whether a meeting of the CMG was required. This group has the power to direct the response to an emergency situation. Membership of the CMG would be at Permanent Secretary/Chief Executive level and the group would normally be chaired by the Head of the Civil Service. However, at the lead department's request, it could chair the CMG. In very severe emergencies, the CMG may be chaired and/or attended by Ministers.

**11.16** Meetings of the CMG would deal with strategic policy issues and prioritise the management of any issues arising from the emergency. Whichever organisation chairs the CMG, the Lead Department would be expected to have a key role in briefing the meeting, identifying issues to be addressed, and co-ordinating actions the CEMG may be required to meet to give effect to the decisions of the CMG.

**11.17** The roles of the lead department, CEPU and attending organisations in the CMG would be similar to those in the CEMG, but the CMG would:

- a) report to ministers;
- b) take strategic decisions and monitor implementation; and
- c) discuss long-term and high-level policy issues and set objectives for the response and the recovery.

**11.18** It follows that representatives on the CMG should be empowered and prepared to take strategic decisions and commit their organisations to implement them.

## Northern Ireland Information Management Centre

**11.19** In situations where there is widespread disruption to public services and infrastructure, CEPU has the facility to activate its Northern Ireland Information Management Centre (NIIMC). NIIMC would gather and collate information on the situation from across the Northern Ireland public services and infrastructure providers. The primary purpose of NIIMC would be to provide co-ordinated briefing to OFMDFM top management and OFMDFM ministers

and to identify any emerging difficulties which need to be notified to responding organisations for resolution. Briefing would also be circulated to Northern Ireland departments and other key organisations as appropriate. NIIMC would act in support of the OFMDFM Chair of the CEMG and the CMG, as appropriate.

**11.20** The lead department would work closely with NIIMC, possibly sending a member of staff to the CEPU office (or any other location used for NIIMC) to act as liaison.

# Chapter 12

## The role of central government in response

### Summary

- In some instances the scale or complexity of an emergency is such that some degree of central government support or co-ordination becomes necessary (paragraphs 12.1–12.5).
- A designated lead government department or, where appropriate, a devolved administration, will be made responsible for the overall management of the central government response (paragraphs 12.12–12.13).
- Central government will not duplicate the role of local responders (paragraph 12.5).
- The strategic objectives for the central government response are to protect life and property as far as possible, support the continuity of everyday activity and the restoration of disrupted services at the earliest opportunity, and uphold the rule of law and the democratic process (paragraph 12.2).
- Central government maintains dedicated crisis management arrangements to support this role (paragraphs 12.6–12.11).

## Good practice and useful information

**12.1** Most emergencies in the United Kingdom are handled at the local level by local responders with no direct involvement by central government. However, in some instances the scale or complexity of an emergency is such that some degree of central government support or co-ordination becomes necessary.

**12.2** The guiding principles set out in Chapter 2 of this guidance document apply equally to central government. These principles support a clearly identifiable set of objectives for the central government response to all emergencies, including multiple incidents where a number of incidents occur close together in the same area or different parts of the country. The strategic objectives for the central government response are therefore to:

- a) protect life and property;
- b) support the continuity of everyday activity and the restoration of disrupted services at the earliest opportunity; and
- c) uphold the rule of law and the democratic process.

**12.3** There may, in practice, be some tension between these objectives, and ministers will need to provide early strategic direction on the appropriate balance to strike in light of circumstances at the time.

**12.4** To achieve these strategic objectives, central government will:

- a) react with speed and certainty;
- b) respect local knowledge and decision-making wherever possible, without losing sight of the national strategy;
- c) prioritise access to scarce national resources;
- d) use data and information management systems in support of information-gathering and decision-making, without overburdening front-line responders;
- e) base policy decisions on the best available science and ensure that the processes for providing scientific advice are widely understood and trusted;
- f) draw on existing legislation to respond effectively to the event, and consider the need for additional powers;
- g) apply risk assessment methodology and cost-benefit analysis within an appropriate economic model to inform decision-making; and

- h) explain policies, plans and practices by communicating with interested parties (including the public) comprehensively, clearly and consistently in a transparent and open way that addresses national and local concerns while encouraging and listening to feedback.

**12.5** Central government will not duplicate the role of local responders. Instead, it will deliver several clear outputs:

- a) providing national strategic direction;
- b) mobilising national assets and central government resources and releasing them to support response and recovery efforts as appropriate;
- c) authorising military assistance to the civil power or a central government department;
- d) determining national protective security measures and other counter-measures;
- e) determining the public information strategy, and co-ordinating public advice through the News Co-ordination Centre (NCC) in consultation with 'Gold' Command (where appropriate) and other key stakeholders;
- f) managing the international/diplomatic aspects of the incident;
- g) determining the likely development of the emergency and providing early strategic direction of preparations for the recovery phase (including the restoration of services) to ensure coherent management without conflicting with immediate response, including the role of the regional tier;
- h) advising on the relative priority to be attached to multi-site or multiple incidents and the allocation of scarce national resources; and
- i) decisions on invoking emergency powers at UK or sub-UK basis.

## The Government's central crisis management machinery

### Civil Contingencies Committee

**12.6** Collective decision-making within government is delivered through the Cabinet Committee system. Decision-making during emergencies follows the same pattern. But because of the unpredictable nature of emergencies, the government maintains arrangements for a dedicated committee which is activated only in the event of a major national emergency – the Civil Contingencies Committee (CCC). CCC has only one

standing member, the Home Secretary, and other ministers are invited to attend depending on the nature of the emergency. However, in practice, ministers from most major departments will attend meetings of CCC.

## Cabinet Office Briefing Room

**12.7** The government maintains dedicated crisis management facilities. These facilities provide a venue for collective decision-making and communication during emergencies.

**12.8** The Prime Minister, the Home Secretary or a senior minister nominated by the Prime Minister will normally chair meetings in the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) covering all strategic aspects of the response and recovery effort. Officials in COBR will identify options and propose advice on the issues on which ministers will need to focus.

## Liaison between central government and the local response

**12.9** Where 'Gold' Command has been established and a central government response is required, a Government Liaison Team (GLT) will normally be despatched immediately at the onset of an emergency. The GLT is a multidisciplinary team led by the Government Liaison Officer (GLO). For terrorist or potential terrorist incidents, the GLO will be a senior Home Office official. For non-terrorist incidents, the GLO may come from the lead government department (LGD) or the relevant Government Office in the Regions. The GLO will be the main liaison channel between COBR and those at the scene.

**12.10** For emergencies without a police lead, or where there is a need to communicate more widely with other police forces, the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland (ACPO) will channel requests between central government and police forces. ACPO Scotland performs a similar role in Scotland. A senior ACPO representative in COBR will advise central government on the wider implications of response options and will represent the service's views on wider policing issues. The organisation can also issue national guidance to forces on specific issues. The Police National Information Co-ordination Centre can be activated to support the ACPO representative in COBR.

## Public information

**12.11** Any emergency on a scale requiring a co-ordinated central government response will need national direction of public information from the outset. Central government will be responsible for the national communications strategy for responding to the crisis, the development of which will be co-ordinated with the police where appropriate. An NCC will be established to pull together the national media communications effort. Under Home Office leadership for a terrorist incident or the lead department in other cases, it will work to the policy direction of COBR. Information officers from relevant Whitehall departments and agencies will be attached to the NCC for the duration of the emergency. Overseeing the implementation of this strategy will be the responsibility of the NCC. All media enquiries and requests for ministerial appearances will be directed to the NCC, which will also generate a rolling brief for ministers and a media summary for meetings in COBR.

## The lead government department principle and its operation

**12.12** Where the scale or complexity of an emergency is such that some degree of central government co-ordination or support becomes necessary, a designated LGD or, where appropriate, a devolved administration, will be made responsible for the overall management of the central government response. In the most serious circumstances, this could involve the activation of COBR to facilitate rapid co-ordination and decision-making. In less serious circumstances, the regional resilience tier, on behalf of the LGD, may discharge the central government interest.

**12.13** A pre-designated list of LGDs is maintained and can be found at [www.ukresilience.gov.uk](http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk). Where an emergency occurs that does not permit straightforward LGD categorisation, it will be the responsibility of the Cabinet Office to make a judgement in consultation with the Prime Minister's Office, and appoint the most appropriate LGD.

# Chapter 13

## Emergency powers

### Summary

- Emergency powers are a last-resort option for responding to the most serious of emergencies where existing powers are insufficient (paragraphs 13.1–13.8).
- They are a mechanism for making temporary legislation in order to prevent, control or mitigate an aspect or effect of the emergency (paragraphs 13.9–13.11).
- Emergency regulations must be necessary to resolve the emergency and proportionate to the effect or aspect of the emergency they are aimed at (paragraphs 13.1–13.11).
- What emergency regulations will contain will depend on the circumstances of the emergency (paragraphs 13.10–13.16).

### What are emergency powers?

**13.1** Emergency powers allow the Government to make special temporary legislation (emergency regulations) as a last resort in the most serious of emergencies where existing legislation is insufficient to respond in the most effective way. Emergency regulations may make provision of any kind that could be made by an Act of Parliament or by exercise of the Royal Prerogative, so long as such action is needed urgently and is both necessary and proportionate in the circumstances.

**13.2** The regulations may extend to the whole of the UK or to any one or more of the English regions and/or the devolved administrations. In English regions, Regional Nominated Co-ordinators will be appointed to co-ordinate the handling of the emergency within each region. In devolved areas they will be known as Emergency Co-ordinators.

**13.3** Emergency powers ensure the Government can respond quickly in emergency situations where new powers are needed and there is not time to legislate in the usual way in advance of acting. They ensure the Government can act legally and accountably in

situations where temporary new legal provision is required without the time for Parliament to provide it beforehand.

**13.4** Emergency powers are not a substitute for effective planning and investment; they are a last-resort safety net for when existing powers prove insufficient. Their use cannot be guaranteed in any given situation and there are clear limits on what they may do.

### When emergency powers may be used

**13.5** The Act states that emergency powers can only be used if an event or situation threatens:

- a) serious damage to human welfare in the UK, a devolved territory or English region;
- b) serious damage to the environment of the UK, a devolved territory or English region; or
- c) war, or terrorism, which seriously threatens the security of the UK.

**13.6** They can be used if such a situation is occurring, has occurred or is about to occur. They can therefore be used pre-emptively to attempt to prevent or limit

an expected emergency, to address an emergency while it is taking place and/or to deal with its aftermath and facilitate the return to normality.

**13.7** If the situation or event is so serious as to warrant consideration of use of the powers then the decisive factor will be whether existing powers that could be used to deal with it are insufficient or ineffective. If they are sufficient emergency powers cannot be used, no matter how serious the emergency.

**13.8** The decision to use emergency powers or not is a matter for central government.

## How emergency powers are invoked

**13.9** Emergency regulations are made by Her Majesty by Order in Council on the advice of her ministers. If, for whatever reason, this is not possible without serious delay, a senior minister of the Crown may make the regulations by order. The regulations must then be laid before Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable. Parliament must approve them (with or without amendment) within seven days of laying or they fall. They may stay in force for up to 30 days beginning on the day the regulations are made, but can be renewed for a further 30 days at any point during, or after, this period if it is necessary and proportionate to do so.

## What they will do

**13.10** What emergency regulations will contain will depend on the circumstances of the emergency. It must be necessary to make additional provision and the emergency regulations must be proportionate to the effect or aspect of the emergency they are aimed at. This sets clear limits on what can be done in any given situation. All those powers listed in section 22 of the Act will not be available in every case; the powers actually used will be tailored to the emergency.

**13.11** Any decision to make regulations, and the content of the regulations, will be entirely dependent upon the unique circumstances of a particular emergency.

## Requesting the use of emergency powers

**13.12** The decision to use emergency powers, and the content of emergency regulations, are matters for the UK Government. It will assess any requests made for their use by relevant organisations. Any such requests will have to spell out the following in detail:

- a) what powers are requested and who should exercise them;
- b) why existing powers and alternative approaches (such as a voluntary approach) will be insufficiently effective;
- c) how the powers will be used and why this is necessary;
- d) the implications of not having such powers on response efforts;
- e) who will be affected by the powers, how they will be affected and any human rights issues raised; and
- f) what safeguards should be included to ensure the powers are proportionate to the emergency.

**13.13** The Government will assess requests based upon its overall response strategy and the safeguards laid out in the Act. It should be borne in mind that emergency powers are a last-resort option for dealing with only the most serious of emergencies with wide-scale effects. The presumption is against their use.

## Co-ordinators

**13.14** If emergency powers are used a Regional Nominated Co-ordinator must be appointed for each English region affected. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland this post will be known as the Emergency Co-ordinator. The postholder will be appointed by the Government in order to facilitate co-ordination of activities under the emergency regulations.

**13.15** The role and functions of the Co-ordinator will depend on the nature of the emergency and the response strategy adopted. The role may be very hands-off – overall strategic co-ordination and a public face for the media – or more hands-on, with the emergency regulations granting the Co-ordinator specific powers.

**13.16** The Co-ordinator will act under the direction of the senior minister of the Crown, who will be responsible to Parliament for their actions. The Co-ordinator will act within the parameters set by the emergency regulations, their terms of appointment, and by the senior minister of the Crown. Once appointed they will, in England, be supported by the relevant Regional Resilience Team and, if needed, appropriate resources allocated by the lead government department. They will chair meetings of RCCC at level three.

# Glossary

**ACCess OverLoad Control (ACCOLC)**

The ACCess OverLoad Control scheme gives call preference to registered essential users on the four main mobile networks in the UK if the scheme is invoked during a major emergency.

**Ambulance Incident Officer (AIO)**

The officer of the ambulance service with overall responsibility for the work of that service at the scene of a major incident. Works in close liaison with the Medical Incident Officer (MIO) to ensure effective use of the medical and ambulance resources at the scene.

**Ambulance loading point**

An area, preferably hard standing, in close proximity to the casualty clearing station, where ambulances can be manoeuvred and patients placed in ambulances for transfer to hospital. Helicopter landing provision may also be needed.

**Ante mortem team**

Officers responsible for liaising with the next-of-kin on all matters relating to the identification of the deceased.

**Bellwin Scheme**

Discretionary scheme for providing central government financial assistance in exceptional circumstances to affected local authorities in the event of a major emergency.

**Body holding area**

An area close to the scene where the deceased can be temporarily held until transfer to the temporary mortuary or mortuary.

**Bronze**

Operational level.

**Casualty**

A person killed or physically or mentally injured in war, accident or civil emergency. For Casualty Bureau purposes the term encompasses any person involved in an incident, including evacuees. In maritime emergencies, it is also used to refer to a vessel in distress.

**Casualty bureau**

Police central contact and information point for all records and data relating to casualties, evacuees and others affected by the incident.

**Casualty clearing station**

An area set up at a major incident by the ambulance service in liaison with the Medical Incident Officer to assess, triage and treat casualties and direct their evacuation.

**Civil Contingencies Secretariat**

The Cabinet Office secretariat which provides the central focus for the cross-departmental and cross-agency commitment, co-ordination and co-operation that will enable the UK to deal effectively with disruptive challenges and crises.

**COMAH sites**

Industrial sites which are subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations.

**Command**

The authority for an agency to direct the actions of its own resources (both personnel and equipment).

**Co-ordination**

The harmonious integration of the expertise of all the agencies involved with the object of effectively and efficiently bringing the incident to a successful conclusion.

**Control**

The authority to direct strategic and tactical operations in order to complete an assigned function, including the ability to direct the activities of other agencies engaged in the completion of that function. The control of the assigned function also carries with it a responsibility for the health and safety of those involved.

**Control room**

Centre for the control of the movements and activities of an emergency service's personnel and equipment. Liaises with the other services' control rooms.

**Cordon – inner**

Surrounds and protects the immediate scene of an incident.

**Cordon – outer**

Seals off a controlled area around an incident to which unauthorised persons are not allowed access.

**Crisis management team**

Personnel brought together under the Chief Executive to manage and co-ordinate the local authority response to an emergency.

**Devolved administrations**

Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and Northern Ireland Executive.

**Emergency centre**

Local authority operations centre from which the management and co-ordination of local authority incident support is carried out.

**Evacuation assembly point**

Building or area to which evacuees are directed for transfer/transportation to a reception centre or rest centre.

**Forward control point**

Each service's command and control facility nearest the scene of the incident – responsible for immediate direction, deployment and security.

**Friends and relatives reception centre**

Secure area set aside for use and interview of friends and relatives arriving at the scene (or location associated with an incident, such as an airport or port). Established by the police in consultation with the local authority.

**Gold**

Strategic level.

**Identification Commission**

Group representing all aspects of the identification process, which is set up to consider and determine the identity of the deceased to the satisfaction of HM Coroner.

**Incident control point**

The point from which an emergency service's tactical manager can control his/her service's response to a land-based incident. Together, the incident control points of all the services form the focal point for co-ordinating all activities on site. Also referred to as 'Silver control'. In London, incident control points are grouped together to form the Joint Emergency Services Control Centre.

**Integrated Emergency Management (IEM)**

An approach to preventing and managing emergencies that entails six key activities – anticipation, assessment, prevention, preparation, response and recovery. IEM is geared to the idea of building greater overall resilience in the face of a broad range of disruptive challenges.

**Lead government department (LGD)**

Department which, in the event of a given major emergency, co-ordinates central government activity.

**Major incident**

Any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services, the NHS or the local authority.

**Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC)**

HM Coastguard regional centre responsible for promoting the efficient organisation of search and rescue services and for co-ordinating the conduct of search and rescue operations within a search and rescue region.

**Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre (MRSC)**

HM Coastguard unit subordinate to a rescue co-ordination centre and established to complement the latter.

**Marshalling area**

Area to which resources and personnel not immediately required at the scene or being held for further use can be directed to stand by.

**Media centre**

Central location for media enquiries, providing communication, conference, monitoring, interview and briefing facilities and access to responding organisation personnel. Staffed by spokespersons from all the principal services/organisations responding.

**Media Liaison Officer**

Representative who has responsibility for liaising with the media on behalf of his/her organisation.

**Medical Incident Officer (MIO)**

Medical officer with overall responsibility (in close liaison with the Ambulance Incident Officer) for the management of medical resources at the scene of a major incident. He/she should not be a member of a mobile medical team.

**Mutual aid**

Cross-boundary arrangements under which emergency services, local authorities and other organisations request extra staff and/or equipment for use in a disaster.

**News co-ordination centre**

Supports the lead government department in their communications management of the overall incident.

**Operational level (bronze)**

A level of management which reflects the normal day-to-day arrangements for responding to smaller-scale emergencies. It is the level at which the management of 'hands-on' work is undertaken at the incident site(s) or associated areas.

**Overall incident commander (Gold)**

The designated senior officer in charge of the police response who normally co-ordinates the strategic roles of all the emergency services and other organisations involved.

**Receiving hospital**

Any hospital selected by the ambulance service from those designated by health authorities to receive casualties in the event of a major incident.

**Rendezvous point**

Point to which all people arriving at the outer cordon are directed for logging, briefing, equipment issue and deployment. In protracted large-scale incidents there may be a need for more than one rendezvous point.

**Rest centre**

Building designated by the local authority for the temporary accommodation of evacuees, with overnight facilities if necessary.

**Search and rescue (SAR)**

Operations for locating and retrieving persons in distress, providing for their immediate needs and delivering them to a place of safety.

**Senior investigating officer (SIO)**

The senior detective officer appointed by the senior police officer to assume responsibility for all aspects of the police investigation.

**Silver**

Tactical level.

**Statutory Services**

Those services whose responsibilities are laid down in law: for example, police, fire and ambulance services, HM Coastguard and local authorities.

**Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG)**

A group comprising senior officers of appropriate organisations which aims to achieve effective inter-agency co-ordination at strategic level. This group should normally be located away from the immediate scene.

**Strategic level (gold)**

A level of management which establishes a policy and overall management framework within which tactical managers will work. It establishes strategic objectives and aims to ensure long-term resourcing/expertise.

**Survivor reception centre**

Secure area set up by local authority to which survivors not requiring acute hospital treatment can be taken for short-term shelter, first aid, interview and documentation.

**Tactical level (silver)**

A level of management which provides overall management of the response to an emergency. Tactical managers determine priorities in allocating resources, obtain further resources as required, and plan and co-ordinate when tasks will be undertaken.

**Temporary mortuary**

Facility accessible from a disaster area designated for temporary use as a mortuary and adapted for post mortem examinations.

**Triage**

Process of assessment of casualties and allocation of priorities by the medical or ambulance staff at the site or casualty clearing station prior to evacuation. Triage may be repeated at intervals and on arrival at a receiving hospital.

**Utilities**

Companies providing essential services, eg gas, water, electricity, telephones.

**Voluntary aid societies (VAS)**

St John Ambulance, St Andrew's Ambulance and the British Red Cross Society.

## Acronyms

Not all acronyms appear in both *Preparing for Emergencies* and *Responding to Emergencies*.

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AIO	Ambulance Incident Officer
BASICS	British Association for Immediate Care Schemes
BCI	Business Continuity Institute
BCRC	British Cave Rescue Service
BTP	British Transport Police
CCD	Civil Contingencies Division (of the Scottish Executive Justice Department)
CCS	Civil Contingencies Secretariat
CEMG	Central Emergency Management Group
CEPU	Central Emergency Planning Unit (OFMDFM)
CFOA	Chief Fire Officers Association
CHAI	Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspections
CMG	Crisis Management Group
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CSIA	Central Sponsor for Information Assurance, Cabinet Office
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DfID	Department for International Development
DfT	Department for Transport
DH	Department of Health
DPH	Director of Public Health (in a Primary Care Trust)
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EA	Environment Agency
EPU	Emergency Planning Unit
F&R	Fire and Rescue
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FSA	Food Standards Agency or Financial Services Authority, depending on the context
GLA	Greater London Authority
GNN	Government News Network
HA	Health Authority
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
HO	Home Office
HPA	Health Protection Agency
HSC	Health and Safety Commission
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
IRC	International Rescue Corps
JTAC	Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre
LA	Local Authority
LFEPA	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
LRT	London Resilience Team
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Met Office	Meteorological Office
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
MRC	Mountain Rescue Council
MRCC	Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre

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MRSC	Maritime Rescue Sub Centre
NAW	National Assembly of Wales
NCC	News Co-ordination Centre
NCIS	National Criminal Intelligence Service
NDPB	Non-departmental public body
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NHS	National Health Service
NIDIS	Northern Ireland Department Information Service
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NISCC	National Infrastructure Security Co-ordination Centre
NORMIT	Norfolk Major Incident Team
NVASEC	National Voluntary Aid Society Emergency Committee
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OFCOM	Office of Communications
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (Northern Ireland)
OFWAT	Office of Water Services
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PHA	Port Health Authority
PHAS	Public Housing Assessment System
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RAYNET	Radio Amateurs Network
RDPH	Regional Director of Public Health
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SAR	Search and Rescue
SCG	Strategic Co-ordinating Group
SE	Scottish Executive
SHA	Strategic Health Authority
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
SoS	Secretary of State
VAS	Voluntary Aid Societies
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WEWG	Wales Emergencies Working Group
WPI	Wales Programme for Improvement
WRF	Wales Resilience Forum
WRVS	Women's Royal Voluntary Service

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