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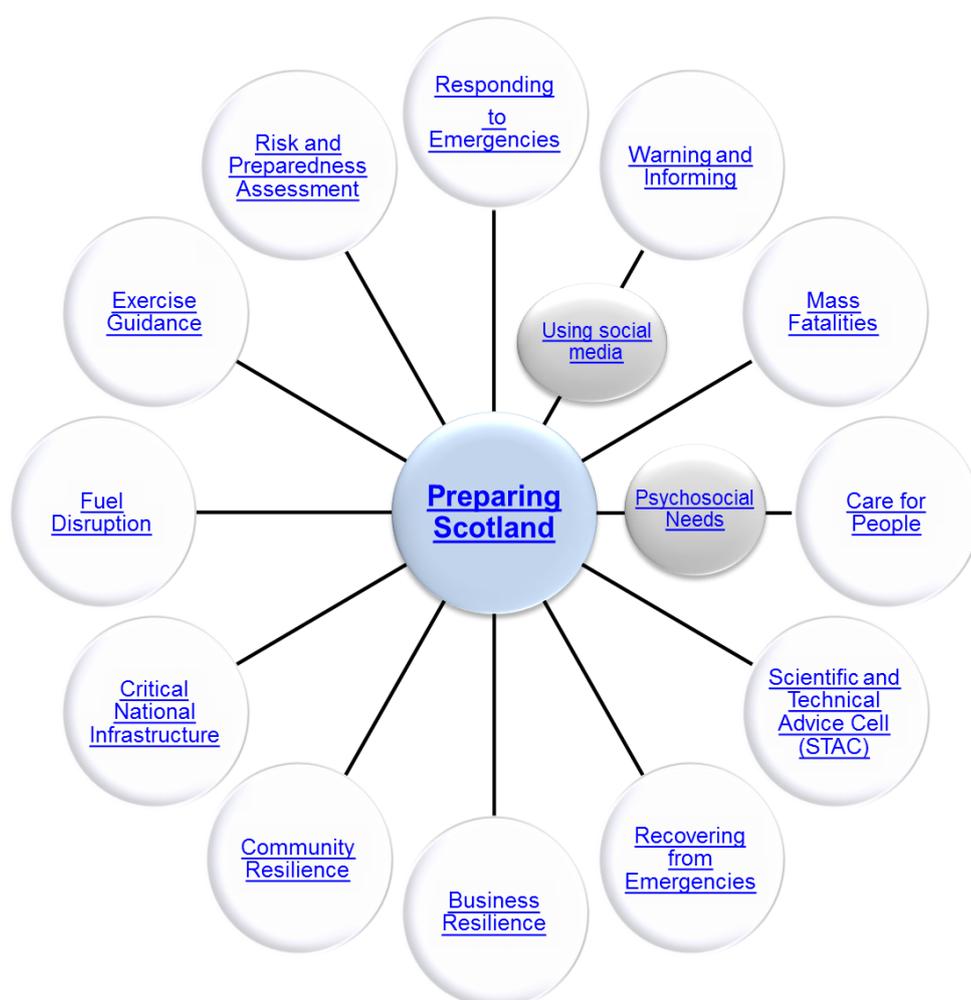
Responding To Emergencies

SCOTTISH GUIDANCE ON RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

Introduction

This document is part of the Preparing Scotland suite of guidance. Preparing Scotland guidance is set out as a "Hub and Spokes" model. The central Hub incorporates the philosophy and principles of resilience in Scotland, governance structures, regulatory guidance and recommended good practice. The spokes, of which this guidance is part, provide detailed guidance on specific matters, see diagram below. This guidance relates to Responding to Emergencies.

"Hub and Spokes" MODEL

Users who are familiar with the structures and processes of resilience in Scotland may use this Responding to Emergencies guidance in isolation. For those unfamiliar with these structures it is recommended that this guidance is read in conjunction with the central hub, Preparing Scotland.

Purpose of Guidance

Preparing Scotland, Responding to Emergencies, is not intended to be an operations manual, but is instead guidance to responders assisting them in planning and response. It establishes good practice based on professional expertise, legislation and lessons learned from planning for and dealing with major emergencies at all levels. It is intended to be a flexible and responsive document, able to respond to new hazards and threats as well as those more frequently encountered.

Legislation

Preparing Scotland is underpinned by the principal legislation involved, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (the Act) and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2005/Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2013 (the Regulations).

Responders

The Act and the Regulations outline the key organisations responsible for ensuring the effective management of emergencies in Scotland. These are:

Category 1 Responders:

- Local Authorities
- Police
- Fire
- Ambulance
- Health Boards
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Category 2 Responders:

- Electricity Operators
- Gas Suppliers
- Scottish Water
- Communications Providers
- Railway Operators
- Airport Operators
- Harbour Authorities
- NHS National Services Scotland
- Health and Safety Executive.

In addition to the above, other agencies can have an important role in the context of resilience. These include but are not confined to:

- the military
- the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)
- Transport Scotland
- commercial organisations
- the Scottish Government
- the voluntary sector

 Duties

The legislation places a number of legal duties upon Category 1 responders. These are, in brief:

1. Duty to assess risk
2. Duty to maintain emergency plans
3. Duty to maintain business continuity plans
4. Duty to promote business continuity[1]
5. Duty to communicate with the public
6. Duty to share information
7. Duty to co-operate.

For Category 2 responders the basic legislative principle is that they must co-operate with Category 1 responders in connection with the performance of their duties, including the proper sharing of information.

Structures

The Regulations[2] outline the structure within which cooperation to meet these legal duties should be undertaken, namely the Regional Resilience Partnerships (RRP). The RRPs do not have the power to direct individual members in the undertaking of their duties.

There are three RRPs, the North of Scotland, East of Scotland and West of Scotland.

To support working arrangements and maintain effective local liaison, the RRP areas have been sub-divided into 12 Local Resilience Partnerships (LRPs), taking account of existing Local Authority and, where applicable, Health Board boundaries.

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[1] This duty applies to Local Authorities only
[2] The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2013; Reg: 2(2)(a)

Response

Command, Control and Coordination of Emergencies

Response to every emergency requires to be tailored to its particular circumstances. These circumstances will dictate the appropriate level of management required. The key principle is having the right people in the right place at the right time.

The management of emergency response is based upon a framework of three ascending levels, namely **Operational, Tactical** and **Strategic**.

Operational: The level at which management of immediate 'hands on' work is undertaken at the site(s) of the emergency or other affected areas. Operational Commanders will concentrate their effort and resources on the specific tasks within their areas of responsibility, for example the Police may concentrate on establishing cordons, traffic control and evidence gathering whilst Ambulance personnel may undertake immediate triage and treatment of the injured. In most but not all instances the Police will coordinate the operational response at an identifiable scene, usually the **Forward Control Post**, and each agency must strive to ensure an integrated effort.

Tactical: The purpose of tactical management is to ensure that actions taken at the operational level are coordinated, coherent and integrated in order to maximise effectiveness and efficiency. Although each of the senior officers or managers will have specific service or agency responsibilities, together they must jointly achieve a level of multi-agency coordination which ensures that Operational Commanders have the means, direction and capabilities required to deliver the most effective coordinated response. Multi-agency coordination can be complex and involve a wide range of Resilience partners. Many emergencies will be managed successfully by this level of support without the need for recourse to a strategic level of management. Additionally, on some occasions, the oversight of an incident might involve a mix of senior and chief officer representatives depending on availability, local arrangements and other relevant factors. Coordination above the operational level will involve partners convening at a Multi-Agency Coordination Centre (MACC). However on many occasions this coordination may be achieved virtually through the use of tele/video conferencing facilities.

Strategic: Strategic management must comprise representatives of appropriate seniority or authority who are empowered to make executive decisions in respect of their organisation resources. This level of management has overall responsibility for the effective multi-agency response and when required will establish the policy and strategic framework within which subordinate command and coordinating groups will work. The direct involvement of strategic management may not be required in all instances but this should be continually assessed. If required, a Strategic level

group of chief officers can convene virtually by tele/video conferencing or may be accommodated at the designated MACC.

Operational, Tactical and Strategic are sometimes referred to as Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The procedures for mobilising the structures described will be flexible and adapted to the circumstances.

As mentioned above, it is not always necessary to establish all three levels and the principle of subsidiarity applies; that is to say, the *control* of the emergency is exercised at the lowest practical level with *co-ordination* at the highest level necessary.

To ensure an effective response, membership of the Resilience Partnerships, at whatever level, should consist of those individuals who are best placed to deliver the required outcomes.

Further guidance on structures for multi-agency response can be found in the Preparing Scotland Hub.

Response Scale

Under the principle of subsidiarity, local resilience arrangements are, in most cases, the primary vehicle for ensuring the appropriate coordination of response. Local arrangements should reflect what works most effectively in a specific area. Cooperation should extend beyond the Responder agencies, to include voluntary sector and community based organisations which have important resources, including local knowledge and networks.

The geographical scale or the technicalities involved in an incident may require a more regional or even national approach from some responders. The coordinating structure in response to an incident should reflect this. The coordinating structure should also have regard to the nature of the incident and the location. For similar events, such as flooding during severe weather, it would be appropriate to develop response through a Resilience Partnership convened under routine local arrangements. However, where the same incident, such as an aircraft crash, involves partners over a wider area and crosses LRP or RRP boundaries, then Resilience Partnership membership should reflect all those agencies directly involved in response.

Providing all required responding agencies are fully participating at the appropriate level, the terminology of 'local' or 'regional' is of limited significance and the term Resilience Partnership can be used to describe the response structure during an incident. The term 'Resilience Partnership' should be regarded as completely synonymous with the incident management structures outlined above i.e. 'The Resilience Partnership is responding at Operational, Tactical or Strategic level as appropriate'. Additionally, from a more geographical perspective in some instances a Resilience Partnership, for a specific single event, may be operating across local and regional boundaries.

Response Objectives

Whilst many organisations and agencies have their own specific roles and responsibilities, agreed multi-agency objectives during an emergency must be determined, and understood from the outset. To achieve this it is essential that there is a shared understanding of multi-agency coordination arrangements based on the principles of the three management levels stated on page 4.

Although every emergency has unique characteristics which must be considered, the following is a generic guide relevant to all management levels:

- Protecting human life, property and the environment
- Minimising the harmful effects of the emergency
- Managing and supporting an effective and coordinated joint response
- Maintaining normal services as far as is possible
- Supporting the local community and its part in recovery
- Managing and supporting an effective and coordinated joint response.

During an emergency it is essential that there is a shared understanding of multi-agency coordination arrangements.

Incident Types

Incidents broadly fall into two categories: spontaneous, those for which there is no or very little prior warning and; non-spontaneous, those where some early indication of a potential incident exists.

Spontaneous incidents are often referred to as 'intensive', 'no warning' or 'sudden impact'. Incidents where some prior warning exists are often referred to as 'extensive', 'slow burn' or 'rising tide'. Broadly speaking spontaneous incidents will be at a single site or scene (more rarely at multiple scenes) whereas non-spontaneous incidents will generally be more geographically widespread. The divide between the two categories is not absolute. After the initial stages of a spontaneous incident, more formal management structures will quickly be put in place. As time progresses, the response to a spontaneous incident may look little different to one where some prior notice had been available.

In a similar manner, even in emergencies where prior notice is available, aspects of the initial response may be spontaneous. For instance, prior notice of a severe weather emergency across a wide area may cause responders to put broad arrangements in place. Nevertheless, actual incidents within that area, the flooding of a particular village for instance, may have aspects of a spontaneous response in the early stages.

The exact terminology is less important than the shared understanding between responder agencies as to the nature of the incident.

It should be noted that the Civil Contingencies Act uses the term 'emergency'. The term 'major incident' is, however, also widely used in practice. Other terms may also be encountered, 'Disaster', 'Major Accident' or 'Major Incident Control Committee (MICC)' incident (in the case of Grangemouth). Providing a clear understanding

exists between responders, these terms are essentially interchangeable and for all practical purposes, carry the same meaning.

Spontaneous Incidents

For spontaneous incidents Category 1 and 2 responders must rely on their own internal arrangements and relevant multi-agency and/or site specific plans. This will guide the level and type of response required.

It is not possible to be definitive in terms of escalation points, however, the undernoted would indicate a need to activate multi-agency coordination:

- Significant number of casualties/fatalities reported
- Significant level of public assistance calls related to an incident
- Significant level of assets deployed to an incident
- Significant disruption to transport or infrastructure due to an incident
- Need to coordinate response to more than one incident or scene or a wide area emergency
- A deteriorating situation.

During a spontaneous emergency, initial multi-agency coordination at the scene will normally be led by the Police Incident Officer[3] and will involve other responders' Operational Commanders or Incident Officers.

Managing the scene of a spontaneous emergency

The scale and nature of most major incident or emergency sites requires them to be properly secured and managed. Although rescue and the saving of life is the primary focus, such sites need to be treated both as a source of health and safety concerns for emergency responders and, potentially, major crime scenes. Responders should follow established health and safety protocols and procedures for dealing with major crimes. The preservation of evidence, whilst vital, must never outweigh the preservation of life.

Proper cordons and controlled access to the scene should be established as soon as practicable. The co-operation of all personnel is required in properly reporting their own arrival and departure. Responders should challenge anyone who is seeking to or has gained unauthorised access that could jeopardise both the rescue effort and the investigation process.

In a situation where hazardous sites have prepared site-specific plans, it may be that locations for cordons, rendezvous points (RVPs), marshalling areas and the forward control point have been pre-determined. Site specific plans, where relevant, should

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[3] Incidents of a particularly specialist nature may be led by other agencies, for instance, the Maritime & Coastguard Agency may lead in the sudden sinking of a vessel.

always be consulted. The actual locations used, however, may have to be adjusted in light of changed circumstances and dynamic risk assessment.

Major Incident Site

The following diagram gives an indication of the scene layout of a 'Spontaneous' major incident or emergency.
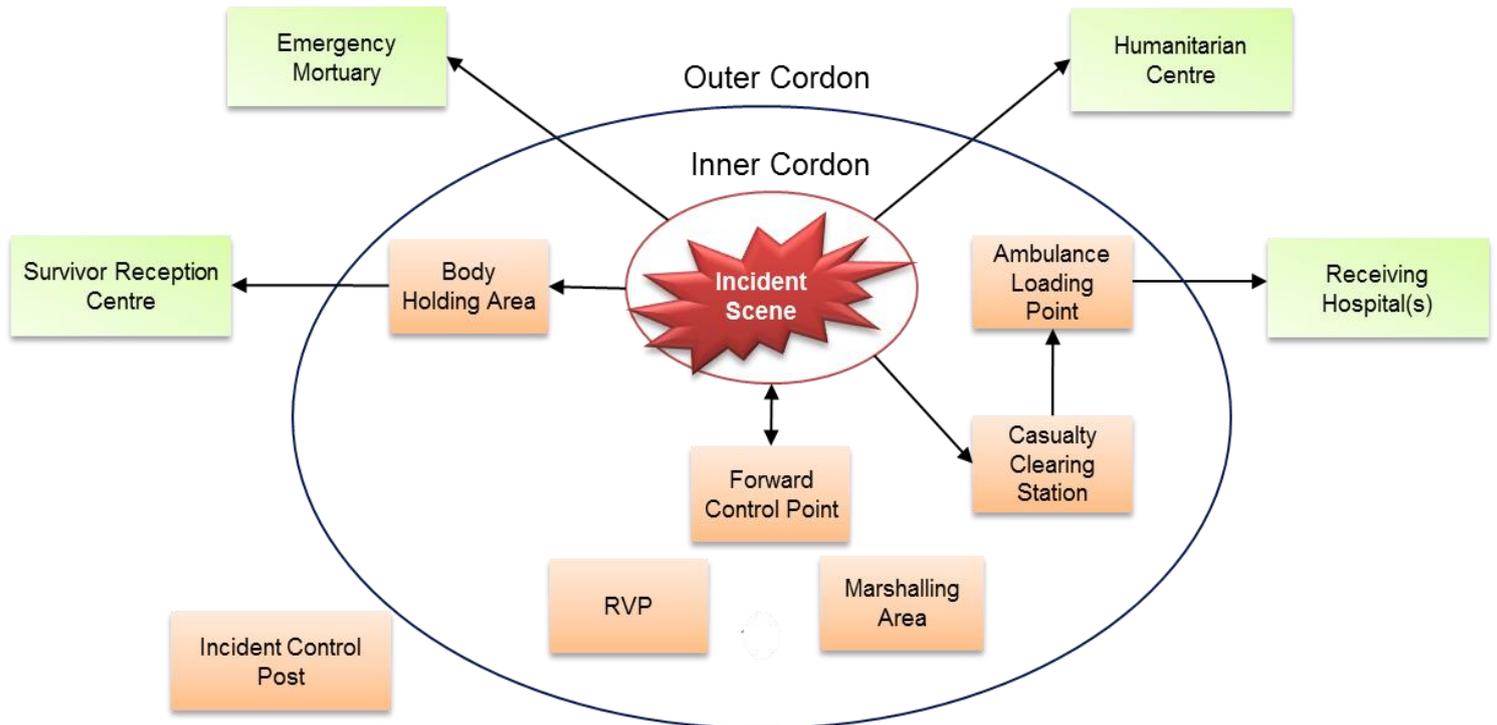
Actions by First Responders at Scene

The initial actions of the first responders from the emergency services to arrive at the scene of an emergency are of great importance. The immediate responsibility is to assume interim command and ensure that the other emergency services are informed if they are not already in attendance.

The first emergency services responder on scene has a duty to ensure that appropriate information is passed back to their respective control room for action and further distribution.

'METHANE' is the nationally recognised mnemonic devised to help first responders on the scene to record and report a comprehensive initial assessment to their control room.

Major Incident declared
Exact Location
Type of Incident
Hazards present or suspected
Access routes that are safe to use
Numbers, type and severity of casualties
Emergency services present and those required
The respective officers should then:

- decide whether to declare a major incident;
- take interim charge until relieved by a more senior officer;
- maintain contact with their control room.

Cordons

Cordons are established around any emergency scene for the following reasons:

- secure the scene
- protect the public
- facilitate the safe operations of the emergency services and other agencies
- control onlookers
- prevent unauthorised interference with the investigation
- protect the integrity of any evidence that may be there.

All cordons will be placed according to circumstances and may need to be re-positioned during the course of a Major Incident or Emergency. Up to three cordons may be established as described on the next two pages. This will be done by the police in consultation with other agencies, although an interim cordon may be established by the first responder on scene if police are not the first to arrive. The importance of managing cordons, once established, cannot be over emphasised.

Appropriate health and safety management arrangements should be introduced and enforced. The responsibility for health and safety of staff at an incident rests with each agency. Employees of responder agencies have a legal responsibility to follow their employer's guidance and to look after their own and others safety under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Section 7.

Some Major Incident or Emergency scenes can have a range of potential hazards including substances that are flammable, reactive, explosive or toxic. Technical advice should be sought whenever necessary and can be provided by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Environmental Health Officers, Public Health Consultants and other specialist responders represented at the Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC).

In terrorist incidents or suspected terrorist incidents, it is a criminal offence to cross a police cordon without authority after having been previously warned.

Inner Cordon

When cordons are set only authorised personnel who have a role, are suitably briefed and are wearing appropriate protective clothing will be permitted entry. Briefing should include information on hazards and any evacuation signal.

Police Scotland will control all access and egress to the inner cordon through a control point at the outer cordon.

SFRS will log and verify their own service personnel and other agency staff entering the inner cordon. In addition, Police Scotland and Scottish Ambulance Service, working in conjunction with SFRS, will also log and verify their own service personnel entering the inner cordon. Police Scotland will also log representatives from the utilities and other investigators.

SFRS is responsible for safety management of all personnel within the inner cordon.

An inner cordon may well be in place for a prolonged period however, the boundaries could be redefined once the emergency response has been terminated and search for evidence has been completed. The immediate area however may be out of bounds for days or, in some instances, longer.

In some circumstances, particularly in the absence of SFRS, other agencies may have specific skills to resolve the situation; responders should act on advice given by them.

In the event of a coastal rope rescue situation, the officer in charge from Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) will set up a cordon in the vicinity of the cliff edge and advice given must be acted upon by all responders.

Outer Cordon

Police Scotland will control all access and egress points to the outer cordon. The identity of all responders requiring access through the outer cordon will be checked at the RVP prior to attending the access point.

The command/control vehicles of the emergency services should be positioned between the inner and outer cordons as should the RVP and marshalling area.

Cordon Removal

During a prolonged incident the redefining of cordon areas will be continually reassessed.

Police Scotland will aim to keep drawing in the outer cordon so that, at any time, only areas that have yet to be cleared for safety are within it. As premises are progressively freed from the cordon, occupiers will need to be on hand to secure their premises as soon as they are released.

Police Scotland assisted by the Local Authority, Housing Association etc. should ensure that occupiers likely to be affected are given sufficient advance notice of the movement of the cordon boundaries.

Traffic Cordon

A traffic cordon may be established to restrict vehicle access to the area surrounding the scene.

Immediate action must be taken to ensure the free passage of emergency traffic to and from the scene of the incident and to prevent congestion at and around the scene.

Cordons will be placed according to circumstances and may need to be moved during the course of an event.

Rendezvous Point (RVP)

An RVP under the control of a police officer will be established in suitable proximity to the scene. Emergency vehicles attending an incident should arrive at the RVP in the first instance, have their attendance recorded and await deployment either directly to the scene or to the marshalling area for holding until required.

Marshalling Area

A marshalling area under the control of an officer from each emergency service should be identified and established between the RVP and the scene. Vehicles requiring access to the scene should be held in this area. The police would normally assist in marshalling vehicles belonging to a local authority and/or other organisations.

This area is for resources not immediately required at the scene or which, having served their purpose, are being held for future use. It should therefore be an area suitable for accommodating large numbers of vehicles.

The marshalling area officers should inform their respective controls of the arrival of any resources so that they may be deployed by their controllers. Marshalling areas may also be used to provide briefing/debriefing areas and recuperation for personnel involved in arduous work at the scene.

As the event moves from a response focus, utilities companies and other contractors may need to maintain the marshalling area during recovery work.

Forward Control Point (FCP)

The FCP is the initial focal point from which the operational level of management "at scene" will be co-ordinated by the Police Incident Officer (PIO), in consultation with the incident officers/managers of the other services. **The importance of the consultation process should not be underestimated.** Experience has demonstrated the benefits of establishing close contact between the emergency services and others involved in the management of emergencies.

The Incident Commander/Officers from the respective emergency response agencies will jointly exercise their authority from this point in a co-ordinated manner. These individuals can be identified by the distinctive tabards they must wear.

Ideally the FCP should be located at, or near to, the perimeter of the inner cordon and provide a single access to the emergency site. The location should be chosen carefully as relocation may prove extremely difficult once established. There should be sufficient space to accommodate the command vehicles of all the emergency services. The site should be clear of all hazards associated with the emergency but close enough to maintain control. Matters such as wind direction should be considered and relocation should not be ruled out if safety is compromised.

Incident Control Post (ICP)

The ICP is the place from which tactical commanders/managers from the emergency services and other appropriate organisations can manage and direct their services' initial response to a land-based emergency while liaising with counterparts close to the scene. Once ICP arrangements are in place, handover for tactical level co-ordination at the scene from a control room to ICP should be implemented to ensure proper demarcation between respective functions during an emergency.

The actual location of the ICP will be determined by the police in consultation with the other emergency services, either making use of an appropriate building or possibly set up on hard standing if available. It is important that key organisations are represented to enable the ICP to function effectively relatively close to the scene as the focal point for tactical level co-ordination of response activities.

The ICP should afford facilities from which key representatives can both meet and work. Provision is needed for meeting space, adequate for the full complement of agency representatives and separate from ongoing work areas, to allow the Tactical Commander an environment in which effective meetings can be conducted. The Tactical Commander should ensure that someone is responsible for maintaining a rolling log/status board of key response information.

Pre-planning may have identified specific locations from where Tactical Management should be exercised i.e. a Control Centre, Incident Management Suite or some other suitable venue.

Mobile Command Vehicles

Police Scotland, SFRS and Scottish Ambulance Service each have bespoke mobile centres that can be sent to an incident site from which they can direct their own operations. However, with agreement, one of these can be opened up for use on a multi-agency basis to support an ICP or a Forward Control Post To aid identification, the blue, red or green identifying lights on each of the above vehicles will be **switched on**. The emergency flashing lights of all other vehicles must be **switched off**, except during incidents on open motorways, or unless deemed to be necessary for reasons of safety.

Casualties/Fatalities

Casualty and fatality handling involves a number of centres of activity including the following:

- Casualty Clearing Station
- Ambulance Loading Points
- Receiving Hospitals
- Body Holding Area(s)
- Temporary Mortuary
- Rest Centres
- Survivor Reception Centres.

(Note that in the event of a maritime incident, the term 'casualty' may refer to a vessel in distress. Recovery may also refer to a phase following response or salvage of a vessel.)

Air Support

Situations may arise where the use of helicopters or fixed-wing aircraft for rescue or casualty clearance is of value. In considering this option, Incident Officers should ensure appropriate liaison with air support providers on:

- the differing types of aircraft and any limitations placed on their use by weather or other conditions
- the normal location of the aircraft
- response times
- correct safety protocols to be used when loading/unloading casualties
- the role of Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) in coordination
- the role of National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) Fareham in coordination[4]

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[4] The ARCC became a function of MCA in 2016

- MCA assistance with ground to air communications and setting up of landing sites
- emergency flying restrictions.

Investigation

Some incidents (notably those where a criminal offence may have occurred) may require an investigation to be undertaken.

Depending upon the nature of the incident, several different agencies may undertake their own investigation. They may all attend the scene with video / photography teams and technical experts.

These agencies may include:

- Police Scotland
- Scottish Police Authority (SPA) Forensic Services
- SFRS Incident Research & Investigation Section (IRIS)
- The Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB)
- The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB)
- Railway Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)
- MCA Enforcement Branch.

The above list of investigative agencies is not exhaustive and the type of incident will dictate the agencies involved.

The investigation should not interfere with the saving of life but where appropriate any scene(s) must be secured as soon as possible and anything which can be reasonably anticipated to be required as evidence should be preserved and not damaged, moved or disposed of without reference to the lead investigator.

Evidence gathering may delay other secondary activity. For example, an incident on the transport system may necessitate the closure of a stretch of road or rail network. Evidence collection from any scene may delay a return to normality for ordinary residents or businesses. Investigators are aware of the potential for disruption and will look to keep partners informed of investigative activity. This can be built into consequence management efforts allowing public confidence to be maintained.

Terrorism

The principle of a 'consequences not causes' approach, as outlined in the core guidance, means that many aspects of a response to a terrorist incident will be the same or very similar to that of a more 'mainstream' emergency. Nevertheless, some aspects of such an incident will require additional measures.

- Further guidance on terrorism matters can also be found in the Home Office National Counter-Terrorism Contingency Planning Guidance. It should be noted that this document contains sensitive information and is the subject of security controls.
- Further advice can also be gained from the appropriate Police Scotland representative or the Scottish Government Security and Counter Terrorism Unit.

The response to a terrorist incident will be similar to that for any other incident. For example, there will be a requirement potentially for public communications activity, **casualty and fatality handling**, care for people, and efforts to support wider consequence management. This will be against the potential backdrop of an ongoing manhunt and a police investigation. It will also require significant interface with the UK Government as elements of the response may be reserved. Some specific considerations exist:

Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Threat

An IED/bomb threat or similar type of incident may have a warning stage when police cordons will be established. The scale of these cordons will initially be pre-determined according to the type of device. However other factors may require cordons to be enlarged from these pre-determined limits. Specialist police or military advice will generally inform such decisions.

The stages associated with such a threat are usually:

- confirmation of an IED incident (based on intelligence or the actual find of a suspect device)
- cordon and evacuation
- rendering the device safe
- gathering of forensic evidence and investigation
- recovery and re-occupation.

For known or suspected terrorist incidents, all personnel should be aware of the possibility of secondary devices. Police will be responsible for checking RVPs, marshalling areas and cordon points for suspicious objects.

Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA)

Owing to its complexity, an MTFA incident requires specific multi-agency procedures to be in place. In this type of incident the threat may be mobile, the weaponry used may require responders to be appropriately equipped, treatment of casualties may be challenging and the need to issue clear guidance to those in the vicinity will be an imperative. A planned multi-agency response has been developed in this area and further specialist tactical advice is available to responders from the appropriate Police Scotland department.

Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN)

A CBRN incident poses unique challenges in respect of the need to detect and identify the CBRN risk, equip responders to attend the scene safely and initiate appropriate decontamination procedures for the public and responders. The decision to decontaminate will be made after the appropriate scientific advice. If required, mass decontamination will involve members of the public being directed to the appropriate area for decontamination. This will also apply to all responding personnel who have entered the contaminated area. Guidance on this will be given by the emergency services, generally, through the tactical or operational commanders, and where appropriate in conjunction with STAC.

A non-malicious hazardous material (hazmat) incident will share a number of characteristics of a CBRN attack. Further specialist tactical advice is available to responders from the appropriate departments of all three 'blue light' agencies.

Non-Spontaneous Incidents/Spontaneous Incidents – Post-initial Response

The availability of information prior to an emergency developing or the details available following the initial stages of a spontaneous incident allows a range of measures to be put in place.

A number of factors would indicate that further action is required by responders. This may include:

- Scale and nature of incident has already drawn multi-agency response which requires more formal coordination
- Evidence or expectation that the conditions associated with an incident will persist or deteriorate
- Significant social, economic, environmental or political impacts are anticipated
- SEPA Flood Warning or Severe Flood Warning
- Met Office Amber or Red Weather Warning.

Key information dictating the necessity of a **coordinated** response may come from any responder agency.

Scottish Government officials may also become aware of information which indicates the need for Regional Partnerships to consider a developing situation, for example, potential infrastructure disruption.

Activation and Coordination

Activation – Resilience Partnership

There are various options for initiating activation of a Resilience Partnership (RP):

- Duty Officer Police Area Control Room (ACR) activates the RP on the basis of available information
- Responder contacts the Duty Officer Police ACR who activates the RP
- Responder contacts the duty or/on call Police Emergencies Procedure Advisor (EPA) who activates the RP
- Responder contacts the Resilience Coordinator who activates the RP
- Responder contacts the LRP secretariat (or similar body) which activates the RP.

Any RRP member can request that a Resilience Partnership (RP) be activated to prepare for or respond to an incident or emergency.

Those initiating the activation should liaise and agree the level of coordination needed and the organisations or individuals required to attend the meeting. They should agree the location and format of the meeting, including whether teleconferencing is appropriate.

The Resilience Coordinator, duty EPA or secretariat representative should be available to arrange and if necessary facilitate the RP meeting. The Scottish Government Resilience Division on call duty officer (or SGoRR if already in operation) should be advised of any arrangements in place.

Activation - SGoRR

On receipt of information pertaining to a spontaneous or non-spontaneous incident of sufficient scale, Scottish Government officials may:

- Consider activation of SGoRR to monitor or respond to event
- Advise all stakeholders if SGoRR is activated
- Liaise with RP(s) through Resilience Coordinators or, in their absence, the duty EPA for details of intended actions/update
- Liaise with police on call EPA for details of intended actions/update
- Liaise with internal/external stakeholders for intended actions/update
- Consider deployment of a Scottish Government Liaison Officer (SGLO)
- Determine a coordinated meeting schedule and the levels of involvement required
- Collate situation updates and circulate a situation report to all stakeholders, including Ministers.

Coordination Activities

Multi-agency co-ordination activity undertaken by responding RP members may include:

- Assess and reduce prevailing risks
- Consider welfare, health and safety of the public and responder personnel
- Support rescue operations
- Identify and address issues requiring immediate attention
- Collate information from organisations involved to develop shared situational awareness
- Determine which organisations require to be involved in multi-agency response
- Agree management structures for response
- Agree strategic objectives
- Agree tactical priorities
- Consider resource demand, immediately and in the future
- Develop public and internal communications (where a specific sub-group is not in place)
- Identify and develop contingencies for wider consequences
- Progress actions.

Specialist Meetings/Sub-groups

Some incidents by dint of scale or circumstance will require specialist support structures or sub-groups. This might include, for instance:

- Scientific and Technical Advice Cell
- Public Communications sub-group
- Care for People sub-group
- Recovery sub-group.

Some members of these groups will also participate in other meetings and care should be taken to ensure that these individuals have sufficient time to undertake actions. This will be achieved through the use of deputies and/or meetings being carefully aligned with the broader schedule.

Casualty and fatality handling

Where there has been a significant number of fatalities, responders will face additional responsibilities in areas such as body recovery, body identification and support of the next of kin. Further information on this can be found in regional plans and 'Preparing Scotland: Guidance on dealing with mass fatalities in Scotland'.

Casualty handling can extend from initial triage at the scene through to arrival in hospital and beyond. Whilst led by the Scottish Ambulance Service and the responding territorial Health Board, assistance may be required from a range of responder agencies to facilitate the response. Further guidance can be found in the 'Mass Casualties Incident Plan for NHS Scotland'. From a public communications

perspective there needs to be a clear understanding of who provides definitive information on casualties to other agencies and to the media.

Support and Care for People

Support and Care for People is a crucial element of any response. Those affected by emergencies can include:

- The injured
- The dead
- The bereaved
- Those directly involved but uninjured
- Families and friends of those directly involved
- Vulnerable people (including the elderly, the young, those with medical conditions and others disproportionally affected due to their personal circumstances)
- Affected communities, which could be defined by geography, demographics or common interests
- Those indirectly involved who may need support or reassurance
- Responder personnel.

The list shown above is not comprehensive and the impact on people will depend on the individual and the particular circumstances of an emergency.

The response and support functions involved are extensive and complex and the need to ensure sustainability in resourcing is vital. Co-ordinated planning for related regional and local arrangements should be seen as a high priority. This should include having due regard for resourcing the heavy documentation and record-keeping involved.

Depending on the emergency concerned, supporting and caring for people can embrace a wide range of facilities and functions. Examples include:

- Casualty clearing stations
- Receiving hospitals
- Emergency mortuary
- Rest centres
- Survivor reception centres
- Family and friends reception centres
- Humanitarian assistance centres
- Casualty bureau.
- Support in the community.

Further information on this can be found in 'Preparing Scotland: Care for people affected by emergencies', and supplementary annex, 'Responding to the psychosocial and mental health needs of people affected by emergencies'.

As recovery becomes the main focus, support and care for people may be undertaken under the auspices of a recovery group but it should continue for as long as necessary, not just in the immediate response phase.

Public Communications

Police Scotland will generally be the co-ordinating agency with regard to public communications. However, in some instances, for example a public health emergency, another agency may lead. The lead agency should be agreed by responders at an early juncture.

All responding agencies should ensure that public communications messaging is consistent and does not conflict with messaging from other agencies. This is particularly important in terms of safety advice to the public and when numbers of deceased and injured at an incident are being reported. In circumstances where the incident is linked to criminal conduct, responders must ensure that public communications do not compromise any investigation or sub judice matters. Advice on this can be obtained from either the police or Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service representatives.

At the handover of the incident from response to recovery the local authority will become responsible for co-ordinating the public communications effort.

Information and guidance can be found in ['Preparing Scotland: Warning and Informing Scotland:Communicating with the Public'](#)

Community Impact and Reassurance

For many incidents it may be considered appropriate to examine community impact and reassurance measures. This may apply to both the broader community and specific groups such as ethnic minority, religious or vulnerable groups.

Community impact assessment and subsequent reassurance strategies are likely to be of significant importance in the event of a terrorist attack, public disorder or violent protests.

In the event of terrorism, Police Scotland will usually lead (in conjunction with partners) on developing a community impact assessment. This will consider an evaluation and assessment of community tensions, who is affected, potential impacts and plans for mitigation. Mitigation measures might include; public reassurance messages, meetings with vulnerable groups to hear their concerns and offer further reassurance; increased police patrolling in certain areas and the use of trusted community voices.

However, community impact and reassurance may also be required in the event of other types of incident (not just terrorism), and may involve consideration of dangerous buildings, continued provision of essential services, and pollution control, and any required communications locally. Some of this activity may be undertaken under the auspices of a Recovery sub-group.

Recovery

Recovery is usually led by the local authority in whose area the incident has arisen. If more than one area is affected local authorities may agree a lead authority.

Recovery is a co-ordinated process of supporting affected communities in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical well-being.

The manner in which recovery is undertaken is critical to its success. It is best achieved when the affected community is able to exercise a high degree of self-determination and contribute to the process.

In order to influence the response in an appropriate manner, the recovery process needs to be considered by any activated Resilience Partnership from the earliest stages of an incident. A discussion about the formation of a specific Recovery Group, or how recovery issues will be effectively covered, should take place at the first meeting.

Further detailed information can be found in Preparing Scotland document 'Recovering from Emergencies in Scotland'.

Provision of scientific and technical advice

The STAC will be the main mechanism for coordinating multi-agency specialist advice to assist decision-makers. STAC will cover public health, environmental, scientific and technical issues. Protection of public health should be a foremost concern as part of any coordinated emergency response.

Where appropriate, a STAC should be established at an early stage of an emergency/incident to allow time to anticipate the range of impacts which could occur. In this context the STAC has a proactive role and should actively consider "what if" scenarios, rather than being solely reactive.

STAC will usually be formed at the request of the lead responding organisation. The Director of Public Health (DPH) or the duty Consultant in Public Health Medicine (CPHM) for the relevant NHS Board will normally chair STAC meetings.

Further information can be found within the 'Preparing Scotland: STAC Guidance'.

Reporting

Information Sharing

The development of a clear operational picture is central to effective coordination and the main responders have a statutory duty to ensure they share information to enhance situational awareness as widely as necessary.

The reporting of circumstances should be concise, accurate and should capture the key details. It should clearly define that which is known and that which is unknown.

Information needs to be trusted and available to the right people at the right time. The failure to share and exploit information can impede an effective response and can have severe consequences.

In the lead up to and during any emergency, there will be a need to draw information from a number of stakeholders. When dealing with what could potentially be a difficult and complex occurrence, it is important to maintain a reasonably simple approach to the collation of information.

Access to sensitive information must be no wider than necessary for the efficient conduct of a response and limited to those with a business need and the appropriate personnel security control. This "need to know" principle applies wherever sensitive information is collected, stored, processed or shared between responders.

The more sensitive the material, the more important it is to fully understand (and ensure compliance with) the relevant security requirements. In extremis, there may be a need to share sensitive material to those without the necessary personnel security control, for example when immediate action is required to protect life or to stop a serious crime. In such circumstances a common sense approach should be adopted.

Initial information may be passed to Scottish Government officials as soon as reasonably practicable, using out of hours details if required. Information would routinely be forwarded by the Resilience Coordinator or, where necessary, the duty Police EPA. Where SGORR has not stood up, this will be through contact with the on-call Scottish Government duty officer.

The demand for information should not be burdensome for those engaged in the response, this being especially important in the early stages of a response to a sudden emergency.

The reporting mechanisms of all involved should wherever possible share a common template.

Meeting Arrangements

Meetings are likely to be convened at various levels, locations and times to coordinate action and response. It is important therefore to ensure that effective coordination is not compromised by an unstructured approach to scheduling relevant meetings. It is important that that those responding operationally are not hindered by an excessive meeting schedule.

All meetings should be concluded as quickly as possible to allow participants to progress actions and fulfil responsibilities in the wider response. The 3 minute briefing concept as promoted by Scottish Resilience Development Service (ScoRDS) provides an effective model.

Each participating agency is likely to hold internal management team meetings (generally called Emergency or Incident Management Teams). These meetings serve to bring all key individuals in a responding agency together where information can be shared and decisions made.

Meetings will also be held at a multi-agency level for most types of incident. These meetings ensure key information is shared and that any response is 'joined-up'. In the initial stages of a spontaneous incident these will be relatively ad hoc and will likely take place at the scene of the incident.

More formal multi-agency meetings may take place as an incident progresses. The formation, location and duration of these will reflect the particular circumstance of each incident.

At a national level SGoRR will undertake an information collation and dissemination role both internally and externally. If the nature of the event requires, ministers may also participate in resilience related meetings with attendees drawn from the wider range of responders as necessary.

The SGoRR Strategic lead or Head of SGoRR will determine the frequency and format of meetings at national and ministerial level.

SGoRR and Resilience Partnerships should coordinate meetings to prevent scheduling conflict and ensure business can be progressed in an organised and timely manner.

Records

Notes, Decision Logs and Action Logs of all meetings of any response group should be maintained. In addition, it is advised that individual members of any group should make a note of actions and decisions for which they are responsible.

A major incident may result in an investigation as to its cause and a possible fatal accident or other inquiry or criminal trial. The actions of RPs will be of considerable interest. Notes of meetings will be invaluable in this regard and will, insofar as they are relevant, be subject to disclosure in any subsequent proceedings.

Resilience Partnership Situation Report

To avoid duplication of effort and for ease of production, the situation report from the RP should reflect the note of the RP meeting. A situation report should be available for internal and local circulation and transmission to SGoRR as soon as possible after the conclusion of RP meetings. Great care must be taken, however, to ensure that the creation of situation reports does not inhibit the flow of information to and between responders.

A template RP Agenda is at Annex A. When this is turned into a note of meeting it can be used as a template for the situation report.

Scottish Situation Report

On the basis of information shared by all relevant partner agencies, a Scottish Situation Report (SSR) will be created. This will be a single representation of relevant incident information that can be shared with organisations during a multi-agency response. The SSR Template is at Annex B.

Responsibility for developing an SSR will fall on SGoRR during an emergency or incident.

The SSR should provide reassurance that the ongoing response is satisfactory or identify issues causing concern. The SSR will give all responder agencies a common awareness of the situation, will assist in internal and/or media briefing and in developing a consistent approach among partners.

Following a spontaneous incident, the creation of the initial SSR will be dependent on a range of circumstances such as the scale of an incident, its complexity, the number of responders involved etc. This initial SSR will be circulated as soon as is practicable.

Debriefing

Both during and following an emergency, each of the services and agencies involved should participate in appropriate internal and multi-agency debriefing sessions to identify lessons that may be learned for ongoing co-ordination and for subsequent adjustment or amendment of future arrangements.

RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE AGENDA/

RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP SITUATION REPORT (RPSR) WHEN COMPLETE

(Completed by administrative support officer in attendance at Resilience Partnership meeting)

AREA

TIME   DATE   RPSR No.

INCIDENT OVERVIEW
(Running brief of local Key Points)

1	Introduction	All	1 min
2	Attendance		1 min
3	Matters for immediate attention	All	2 min
4	Forward look (as applicable)		2 min
5	Impact and Consequences **Area specific -** People Property Environment Service delivery disruption Public reaction	Category 1 members	10 min

	Concerns and Issues		
6	Impact and Consequences **Infrastructure specific -** Emergency Services • Police Scotland • Scottish Fire and Rescue Service • Scottish Ambulance Service • MCA Government • Local Authorities Health Transport Power Water Telecommunications Finance Food	Police Fire and Rescue SAS MCA NHST Local Authorities SEPA Other as necessary	8 min
7	Public Communications	Chair	3 min
8	Actions and Priorities • Protect and preserve life • Mitigate and minimise impact of incident • Maintain life support infrastructure and essential services • Promote restoration and improvement in aftermath	Chair	2 min
11	AOB	Chair	1 min
12	T/DONM (Situation Report completed and circulated within 30 mins)		(30 mins)

SCOTTISH SITUATION REPORT

Incident/ Event Overview		
SSR Number	**Time**	**Date**

Ongoing response/coordination arrangements and partners involved	
Matters for immediate attention	
Forward look (Including changing conditions, weather, related issues)	
Impact and consequences – area specific (including people, property, environment, service delivery, related issues)	
Impact and consequences – infrastructure specific (Transport, Power, Health, Telecoms, Water, Emergency Services, Government, Finance, Food)	
Media and Communications	
Priorities	