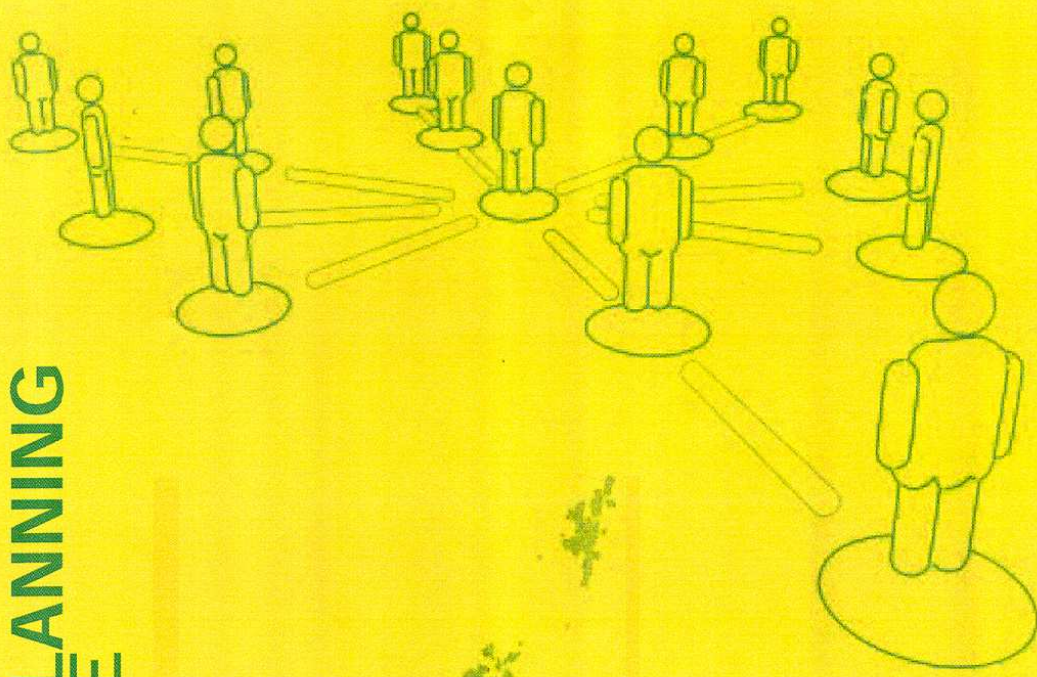


EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE



REFERENCE GUIDE



IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

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1.0 INTEGRATED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The basis of emergency planning and response is known as 'Integrated Emergency Management'. Under the principles of integrated emergency management, the response to an emergency should concentrate on the effects rather than the cause of the disaster and, wherever possible, should be planned and undertaken as an extension of normal day to day activities. The underlying aim of the planning process should be to develop flexible arrangements which will enable agencies to deal with any crisis, whether foreseen or unforeseen.

Integration must be applied at every stage if it is to be fully effective, although the practical arrangements may vary. The main stages are as follows:

- **Mitigation:** This is basically where agencies work together to prevent incidents.
- **Prevention:** This phase encompasses measures which are adopted in advance of an emergency and which seek to prevent it occurring or to reduce its severity.
- **Preparedness:** This is "the insurance policy" consisting of preparation to respond to known hazards and risks as well as to unforeseen events. Planning must be underpinned by training and exercises.
- **Response:** The initial response is normally from the uniformed emergency services supported as necessary by local authorities, utilities, public and private agencies and voluntary organisations. The basic objectives of the response, which will vary according to the circumstances of the event, will be to preserve life, property and the environment; to reduce to a minimum the harmful effects of the event, to prevent its escalation, and to facilitate criminal investigations and other enquiries; all without prejudicing as rapid as possible return to normal life.
- **Recovery:** This encompasses those activities necessary to provide a return to normality both for the community affected and for those supporting and serving it.
- **Review:** Events such as Fatal Accident Inquiries and Public Inquiries would be included under this phase, where good and/or bad practice is identified.

As regards response to disaster, there is no one model; the response will need to vary just as the nature and effects of the disaster will vary. Nevertheless, any response has to be an integrated operation, and certain features will be common to any disaster.

Each service or agency responding has its own role and responsibilities, however, the main duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 fall equally on all Category 1 responders leading to the risk of duplication, for example, carrying out their duty of risk assessment or providing warnings and information to the public. Under these circumstances, the Act allows for the emergency to be dealt with under the lead responder principle. The lead responder may vary depending on the type and severity of the incident.

Agencies providing or contributing to the local response:

1.1 The Police Service - Northern Constabulary

The police role at an emergency includes saving of life, in conjunction with the other emergency services; co-ordination of the emergency services and other organisations dealing with the emergency; control of access to and from the site to protect the scene and preserve evidence; evacuating people, in consultation with the other emergency services and the local authority; co-ordinating warning and informing the public; co-ordinating the media response during the emergency; investigating the incident, in conjunction with other investigative bodies, where necessary; collating and disseminating casualty information; in the event of fatalities, identifying the victims on behalf of the Procurator Fiscal; and assisting the local authority with the restoration of normality at the earliest opportunity.

1.2 The Fire Service - Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service

The concerns of the fire service are the saving of life in conjunction with other emergency services, the rescue of trapped casualties, dealing with fire and other hazards, and assisting the police and ambulance services with casualty handling and recovery of bodies. The fire service is also normally best placed to advise on the safety of personnel of all agencies involved within the inner cordon and it will gather information on chemical hazards via the UK databases 'Chemdata' and 'Chemnet'.

1.3 NHS

The ambulance service normally provides the first NHS response to an emergency. Immediate care for the injured and their evacuation to hospital are its tasks, together with the mobilisation of any further NHS resources required. These may include a Medical Incident Officer supplemented by doctors, nurses and equipment as the situation demands. Overall co-ordination of NHS activity, whether at the scene, in hospitals or elsewhere in the community to meet healthcare needs arising from the emergency, is the responsibility of the appropriate Health Board. Where an emergency is of a purely health related nature, the incident will be co-ordinated by the appropriate Health Board under the lead responder principle, assisted, as necessary, by the other Category 1 responders.

1.4 The Maritime and Coastguard Agency

The MCA is an Executive Agency within the Department for Transport. The Agency's prime role is to develop, promote and enforce high standards of marine safety. This includes minimising the loss of life amongst seafarers and coastal users and responding to maritime emergencies 24 hours a day. The MCA is also committed to minimising the risk of pollution of the maritime environment from ships and where pollution occurs, minimising the impact on UK interests.

HM Coastguard is part of the Maritime Operations Directorate (MOD) and is responsible for the initiation and co-ordination of civil maritime search and rescue within the United Kingdom's search and rescue region.

The Counter Pollution and Response branch is part of the Maritime Operations Directorate and is responsible for providing the national response to pollution from oil and other hazardous substances at sea.

1.5 Local Authorities

In the response to, and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, the principal concerns of local authorities include support for the emergency services, support and care for the local and wider community, use of resources to mitigate the effects of the emergency and co-ordination of the response by organisations, other than the emergency services. As time goes on, and the emphasis switches to recovery, the local authority will assume the overall co-ordination role in rehabilitating the community and restoring the environment. Depending upon the nature of the emergency, the local authority may find itself in the lead responder role from the outset. Under these circumstances, the local authority will co-ordinate the assistance given by other Category 1 responders.

1.6 Scottish Environment Protection Agency

SEPA is the public body responsible for environmental protection in Scotland. It has powers to prevent, minimise or reduce pollution of the environment, and shall give advice on measures that it believes necessary to protect or enhance it. The Agency's main functions include the control of discharges to air, land and water and also the treatment, storage, movement and disposal of waste. In an emergency situation SEPA will respond and give support and advice on such matters to participating agencies and the general public during the initial response and recovery stages.

1.7 Utilities and Commercial Organisations

It should be remembered that industrial or commercial organisations, as well as the utilities, might play a direct part in the response to an emergency if their personnel, operations or services have been involved. Such industries or commercial organisations may provide support through local partnerships when, for example, they provide equipment, services or specialist services.

1.8 Voluntary and Community Agencies

The voluntary agencies will have an important role in any emergency, especially in a welfare capacity, from assisting with evacuee registration, refreshments, first aid, welfare/comforting support and spiritual assistance.

The community can contribute to a wide range of activities, either as members of voluntary organisations or as individuals.

1.9 Military

Military assistance may be called on to support local response. This has been an important part of many emergency responses in the past. Resources and skills which may be available and methods of requesting military assistance are set out in 'Operations in the UK: The Defence Contribution to Resilience' subtitled 'Interim Joint Doctrine Publication 2002 dated December 2004'.

2.0 THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS EMERGENCIES CO-ORDINATING GROUP (HIECG)

This group was set up in May 1998 to promote Integrated Emergency Management throughout the Highlands and Islands, with the aim of ensuring optimum response by the emergency services, public bodies and support agencies in the event of a major civil emergency or natural disaster.

The HIECG meets bi-annually at Police Headquarters, Inverness. The current Chairman of the Group is the Chief Constable of Northern Constabulary.

Membership of the HIECG comprises:

Organisation:

Represented by:

Emergency Services:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Northern Constabulary | Chief Constable |
| • Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service | Chief Fire Officer |
| • Scottish Ambulance Service | Divisional Manager |
| • Maritime and Coastguard Agency | Deputy Regional Controller |

Health Authorities:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| • NHS Highland | Director of Public Health and Health Policy |
| • NHS Orkney | Chief Executive |
| • NHS Shetland | Chief Executive |
| • NHS Western Isles | Chief Executive |

Local Authorities:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| • Comhairle nan Eilean Siar | Chief Executive |
| • The Highland Council | Chief Executive |
| • Orkney Islands Council | Chief Executive |
| • Shetland Islands Council | Chief Executive |

Environment Agency

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| • Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) | Director / Senior Manager |
|---|---------------------------|

Utilities and Military:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • 51 st (Scottish) Brigade | Commander |
| • Scottish and Southern Energy plc | Operations Manager Highland |
| • Scottish Water | General Manager Operations |

The following agencies have **observer status** on the HIECG:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| • Procurator Fiscal Service | Area Procurator Fiscal, Highlands and Islands |
| • Scottish Executive | Head of Fire Service and Emergency Planning |

3.0 THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS EMERGENCY PLANNING GROUP (HIEPG)

This group was set up in January 1999 to deal with pan Highlands and Islands issues as identified by either the Highlands and Islands Emergencies Co-ordinating Group (HIECG) or the four local authorities groups/forums through the Highlands and Islands Emergency Planning Group (HIEPG). The HIEPG will advise the HIECG on policy and strategic direction in relation to all emergency planning matters.

The HIEPG meet four times per annum, six weeks prior to and six weeks after the HIECG meetings.

Membership of the HIEPG comprises the **Emergency Planning Officers**, or those with responsibility for emergency planning, from the following agencies:

Emergency services:

- Northern Constabulary
- Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Health authorities:

- NHS Highland
- NHS Orkney
- NHS Shetland
- NHS Western Isles

Local authorities:

- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- The Highland Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Shetland Islands Council

Utilities and support bodies:

- Military Liaison Officer (Post currently held by RAF)
- Scottish and Southern Energy plc
- Scottish Water
- British Red Cross
- WRVS

Environment Agency

- Scottish Environment Protection Agency

The following agencies have **observer status** on the HIEPG:

- Procurator Fiscal, Inverness
- SEERAD

Minutes of the meetings of both the HIECG and the HIEPG are produced and circulated to members.

4.0 Highland Emergency Liaison Partnership (HELP)

Remit:

To promote effective collaboration through co-ordinated planning and the carrying out of multi-service exercises.

Membership of HELP comprises:

Emergency services:

- Northern Constabulary
- Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Health and local authority:

- The Highland Council
- NHS Highland

Government:

- Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD)

Utilities and voluntary sector:

- Scottish and Southern Energy plc
- Scottish Water
- WRVS
- British Telecom

Environment Agency

- Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Depending on the issues under consideration a number of other organisations may be invited to attend meetings. These would be drawn from:

- British Red Cross
- The Armed Services
- The Salvation Army
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- Scottish Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA)

The group is supported by The Highland Council's Emergency Planning Unit, in a secretariat role, and is responsible for co-ordinating multi-disciplinary activities in emergency planning and response such as training courses, seminars, table top and field exercises.

5.0 Orkney Islands Emergency Forum

The Orkney Islands Emergency Forum (OIEF) was set up in September 1989. The forum has now evolved to become a group where all matters pertaining to emergency planning, encompassing the commercial and utility market as well as the emergency services, are considered without impinging on the autonomous nature of the forum and the organisations of which it comprises. The executive of the OIEF consists of local representatives of category 1 responders as detailed in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

As agreed by the emergency service members of the forum, secretariat services are carried out by the Emergency Planning Unit of the Orkney Islands Council and the chair of the full committee meetings is held by a person entirely independent from any of the core organisations.

Membership of the OIEF comprises:

Emergency services:

- Northern Constabulary
- Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Local Authority:

- Orkney Islands Council

Health Bodies:

- Port Health Authority
- NHS Orkney

Environment Agency

- Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Full forum membership includes the executive membership plus category 2 responders:

- Utilities
- Harbour Authorities
- Public Communication Providers
- Airport Authorities
- Transport Operators
- Health and Safety Executive
- Health Protection Scotland

6.0 Shetland Emergency Planning Forum (SEPF)

The forum will provide the communities of the Shetland Islands with a fully integrated, cohesive and efficient quality response to a crisis, whether foreseen or unforeseen.

Executive membership of the SEPF comprises:

Emergency services:

- Northern Constabulary
- Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Health and local authorities:

- NHS Shetland
- Shetland Islands Council

Environment Agency

- Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Full forum membership includes the executive membership plus:

Transport:

- Sumburgh Airport
- Scatsta Airport
- Northlink Ferries
- Lerwick Port Authority

Military:

- Army (51st Scottish Brigade / 51st Highland Regiment)
- Military Liaison Officer Highland

External agencies and voluntary sector:

- Gilbert Bain Hospital
- Procurator Fiscal (Attends in advisory role only)
- Scottish Executive Health Department
- Scottish Executive Justice Department
- Shetland Council of Churches
- Association of Community Councils
- Shetland Land Rover Club
- Sullom Voe Terminal
- Red Cross
- WRVS

Utilities:

- British Telecom
- Scottish Water
- Scottish and Southern Energy plc

7.0 Western Isles Emergency Planning Co-ordinating Group (WIEPCG)

To promote effective integrated multi-agency emergency preparedness in the Western Isles.

Membership of the Western Isles Emergency Planning Co-ordinating Group (WIEPCG) comprises:

Emergency services:

- Northern Constabulary
- Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Health and voluntary sector:

- NHS Western Isles
- Salvation Army
- British Red Cross
- WRVS

Local authorities:

- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Environment Agency

- Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Military:

- Army, 51st (Scottish) Brigade – Joint Regional Liaison Officer
- Army, 51st Highland Regiment – Local Representative

Transport:

- Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd
- Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd
- Stornoway Port Authority

Utilities:

- Scottish and Southern Energy plc
- Scottish Water
- British Telecom
- Scotland Gas Networks

Observers:

- Procurator Fiscal

8.0 RECENT SPECIFIC ISSUES DEALT WITH BY HIECG/HIEPG

8.1 Website

The Northern Constabulary website hosts a section where members of the public can access information on documents produced by the Highlands and Islands Emergencies Co-ordinating Group, as well as current emergency planning issues. The websites of partner organisations have hyperlinks to the website which allows easy access to the information by members of the public.

8.2 Video Conferencing Facilities

Video conferencing facilities have been installed at Police Headquarters, Inverness, along with the locations of a number of partner agencies. Several meetings of the Highlands and Islands Emergencies Co-ordinating Group have taken place utilising video conferencing to allow some members of the group, who were unable to travel to Inverness, to 'attend' the meetings.

8.3 Highland Safety Scheme : Potassium Iodate Tablets

Following public meetings held at both Broadford and Aultbea, Potassium Iodate Tablets and information leaflets have been issued to 301 households in Broadford and 123 in Aultbea, for the protection of the public within the pre-planned countermeasures zones around the berths at both locations for Royal Navy nuclear powered submarines.

8.4 Chemical Biological Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) Joint Initial Response Plan

Members of the Highlands and Islands Emergency Planning Group produced, on behalf of the Highlands and Islands Emergencies Co-ordinating Group, a multi-agency joint initial response plan in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident. The plan is regularly reviewed in the light of developments in this field.

8.5 Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Members of the Highlands and Islands Emergencies Co-ordinating Group took part in the consultation on the Civil Contingencies legislation, which included meetings with the Scottish Executive and written submission on behalf of the group.

The Scottish legislation came into effect in October 2005

8.6 Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Risk Register

Members of the Highlands and Islands Emergency Planning Group are producing, on behalf of the Highlands and Islands Emergencies Co-ordinating Group, a Community Risk Register for the Highlands and Islands, listing identified hazards. This document will be published on the website.

8.7 Plans to Deal with Major Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases

Plans to deal with major outbreaks of infectious diseases have been developed by the four Health Boards in the Highlands and Islands, and these plans are being tested through exercising with partner agencies. Members of the Highlands and Islands Emergencies Co-ordinating Group have taken part in a Scottish Executive survey on preparedness in the event of an outbreak of pandemic disease.

8.8 Mutual Aid Agreement

The Highlands and Islands Emergencies Co-ordinating Group member organisations have agreed arrangements for the provision of mutual aid between local authorities and health boards within the Highlands and Islands.

8.9 Public Safety Leaflet

A Public Safety Leaflet has been produced by the Highlands and Islands Emergency Planning Group Media Sub-Group, on behalf of the Highlands and Islands Emergencies Co-ordinating Group. The leaflet contains advice for the public in the event of a range of emergencies, along with contact telephone numbers (currently available on the website). Funding is being sought from the Scottish Executive to produce leaflets for distribution.

8.10 Temporary Mortuary

The Scottish Executive has entered into an interim contract with De Boers Limited for the supply of a national emergency mortuary. In the event of a major emergency occurring anywhere in the Highlands and Islands resulting in mass fatalities, De Boers would erect a temporary mortuary where post mortems would be carried out. A representative from De Boers has met with members of the Highlands and Islands Emergency Planning Group to identify suitable sites where the temporary mortuary facility could be erected.

8.11 Satellite Phones

After the January 2005 storms the Scottish Executive supplied the four Local Authority areas with a number of satellite phones. Upon testing, these phones were found to have poor reception and, following representation by the Highlands and Islands Emergency Planning Group, have been replaced by the Scottish Executive. Testing of the new phones has found that they have satisfactory coverage.