Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

A Framework for Major Emergency Management

A Guide to Preparing a Major Emergency Plan

Guidance Document 2 – January 2010

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

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Introduction to A Guide to Preparing a Major Emergency Plan

'A Framework for Major Emergency Management' (2006) replaces the *Framework for Co-ordinated Response to Major Emergency*, which has underpinned major emergency preparedness and response capability since 1984.

The Framework sets out the arrangements by which the principal response agencies will work together in the management of large-scale incidents.

This *Guide to Preparing a Major Emergency Plan* is intended to support the Framework text and to provide additional guidance on the preparation of Principal Response Agency Major Emergency Plans.

This document, like others in the guidance series, is subject to regular review and, for that reason, it is requested that any comments and/or insights that arise during its implementation are fed back to the national level. Comments should be addressed to:

M.E.M. Project Team,
National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management,
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage,
Custom House,
Dublin 1.

November 2022: Since this document was first published, functions of some government departments were transferred with changes to their departmental titles. Some small changes in text have therefore been made.

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Part 1: Generic Plan Activation Procedures

When is the Major Emergency Plan Activated?

The Major Emergency Plan of an agency is activated immediate following a formal declaration by an Authorised Officer of the agency that a Major Emergency exists. The Plan is also activated on the notification of a declaration of a Major Emergency by any of the following:

- **An Garda Siochana**
- **The Health Service Executive**
- **A Local Authority**
- **A Government Department**

Who can declare a Major Emergency and Activate the Plan?

Each agency has nominated Authorised Officers with the authority to declare that a Major Emergency exists. These officers should be trained in and familiar with the procedures for declaration under The Framework for Emergency Management.

Formal Notification Message	Incident Information
This is (*State Name, Title)*	The Mnemonic **METHANE** used to structure and deliver initial information
A *(State type of Incident)*	**M**ajor Emergency Declared
Has occurred/ is imminent at *(State Location)*	**E**xact Location
As an authorised officer I declare that a major emergency exists.	**T**ype of Emergency
Please activate the mobilisation arrangements in the *(Agency Name)* **Major Emergency Plan**	**H**azards, Present and Potential
	Access / Egress routes
	Number and types of Casualties
	Emergency services present and required

Typical Mobilisation Procedures

Receipt of Initial Message in Control/Communications Centre

The Control/Communications Centre of a Principal Response Agency can receive an initial message, regarding a possible or confirmed Major Emergency, in a number of different ways, as follows:

1. A member of the public may call via the 112/999 system and report an event. **The normal response to such information is to dispatch a pre-determined response to the incident site.**

2. A staff member of the relevant Principal Emergency Service may contact the Control/Communications Centre with details of an incident, in the form of an ETHANE message. **Based on the details provided, the Controller on Duty may Declare that a Major Emergency exists or may request further information.**

3. An Authorised Officer of the agency may contact the Control/Communications Centre with a METHANE message informing Control that she/he is Declaring that a Major Emergency exists. **Once a Declaration is made, the Agency Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedures are activated (see below).**

4. A partner Principal Response Agency may contact the Control/Communications Centre with a METHANE message informing the agency that a Major Emergency has been Declared. **Once a Declaration is made, the Agency Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure IS activated (see below).**

Control/Communications Centre Actions on Declaration

Once a Major Emergency has been Declared, the Control/Communications Centre will activate the agency Mobilisation Procedure, which includes:

- **Dispatching an appropriate response to the scene**
- **Informing/Confirming to the other Principal Response Agencies involved that a Major Emergency has been Declared and the Major Emergency Plan has been activated**
- **Activating the agency's Crisis Management Team**
- **Notifying the Parent Department**

Initial Actions at the Site

The initial responders at the site from each Principal Response Agency will organise themselves and undertake tasks in accordance with their own Agencys' Plans, Procedures, Action Cards, etc.

Controller of Operations

Each Principal Response Agency will have a Controller of Operations at the site (or at each site) of the emergency. The most senior officer from the initial response of each Principal Emergency Service will assume the role of Controller of Operations, until relieved, through the agency's predetermined process. The role of the Controller of Operations includes: controlling the activities of his/her agency's services at the site, making decisions appropriate to the role, ensuring co-ordination with the other PRAs, requesting the attendance of such services as are needed and seeking such advice as s/he requires.

The Lead Agency

As soon as they meet, the three Controllers of Operation will determine which one of the Principal Response Agencies is the Lead Agency. Once determined, the Lead Agency assumes responsibility for co-ordination; the Controller of Operations of the Lead Agency acts as On-Site Co-ordinator; and information on the determination is communicated to all parties involved in the response.

On-Site Co-ordination Group

Once the Lead Agency is determined, the On-Site Co-ordinator will convene and chair a meeting of the On-Site Co-ordination Group. The functions of the On-Site Co-ordination Group include: sharing information; taking co-ordination decisions; addressing site management issues; and ensuring that public information messages and media briefings are co-ordinated.

Local Co-ordination Group

Away from the site, a Local Co-ordination Group will be established at a pre-determined Local Co-ordination Centre. This is a strategic group comprising the senior representatives of the Principal Response Agencies involved, and other groups or agencies, as appropriate. The functions of the group include: supporting the services at the scene; providing strategic inter-agency guidance on any wider implications of the event; and communicating with the Lead Government Department.

TO ACTIVATE THIS PLAN

An Authorised Officer OF . . . (Agency Name) ….should contact . .(Centre Name). . Control/Communications Centre using the following Confidential Numbers

Name of Control or Communications Centre	**Telephone Number**	**Back up Number**	**Fax Number**	**e-mail**
xxxxxxxxxxxxx	*33333333*	*444444444*	*55555555*	

If these numbers are not answered use 112/999 as an alternative

The Authorised Officer should Notify the Control/Communications Centre of the Declaration of the Major Emergency using the following message format:

This is …… (Name, rank and service) ……

A …… (Type of incident) …… has occurred/ is imminent

at ……(Location) ……

As an authorised officer I declare that a major emergency exists.

Please activate the mobilisation arrangements in the ..(*Agency Name)….*Major Emergency Plan.

After the declaration is made the Authorised Officer should use the mnemonic METHANE to structure and deliver an information message.

M	**Major Emergency Declared**
E	**Exact Location of the Emergency**
T	**Type of Emergency (Transport, Chemical, etc.)**
H	**Hazards, present and potential**
A	**Access/egress routes**
N	**Number and types of Casualties**

Typical Text from a Local Authority Plan
(The same approach will be followed in the other PRA Plans)

When the initial Declaration of a Major Emergency is made by an Authorised Officer of (name) Local Authority, the Controller on Duty, as part of pre-set actions, will notify the two other PRA's of the Declaration and provide information as available, using the following numbers:

Ambulance Control at	Telephone Number	Back up Number	Fax Number	e-mail
Xxxxxxx	33333333	333333333	33333333	abc@gggg
Xxxxxxx	33333333	333333333	33333333	

Garda Div. HQ at	Telephone Number	Back up Number	Fax Number	e-mail
xxxxx	33333333	333333333	33333333	abc@gggg
xxxxx	33333333	333333333	33333333	abc@gggg

<u>If these numbers are not answered use 112/999 as an alternative.</u>

Where the Local Authority Control/ Communications Centre receives notification of a Major Emergency Declaration from another PRA, the Controller on Duty, as part of pre-set actions, will confirm to the other two Principal Response Agencies involved that the Local Authority Major Emergency Plan has been activated.

The Relevant CAMP Centre will prepare and circulate, by group-fax and/ or group email, a written version of the METHANE message to partner agencies' Control / Communications Centers.

(<u>Note</u> A version of these pages is placed inside the front cover of the Major Emergency Plan of each PRA. As a result, each PRA will make and receive two calls in relation to any Major Emergency Declaration. The purpose of this crosscheck is to confirm that relevant PRAs are aware that a Major Emergency has been Declared. It also ensures that the notification/ confirmation has come from an Authorised Officer.)

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Part 2: Preparing an Agency Plan

'A Framework for Emergency Management' (2006) requires, in Section 4, that a new Major Emergency Plan, in a format consistent with this guide, and incorporating the provisions of the Framework and its Appendices, should be prepared by each principal response agency. The Framework requirement is that:

Each principal response agency should prepare an individual Major Emergency Plan which sets out its arrangements to respond to events occurring in, or impacting on, its functional area which require the declaration of a major emergency.

The updated Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed annually.

The Major Emergency Plan Format

A common format ensures that the common arrangements, which promote co-operation and co-ordination between agencies responding to an emergency, are included in all Major Emergency Plans. It also facilitates the validation of Plans, and checking for inter-service operability. While some elements will be common to all Major Emergency Plans, each plan should be developed and written from the individual principal response agency's perspective, setting out how it will perform its functions and how it will work with partner principal response agencies and others in the response. Section 4 of the Framework requires that:

The Major Emergency Plan of each individual agency should be consistent with the arrangements set out in the Framework, contain the section headings set out below, and should conform with the further guidance in this guide.

Activation (Common Pages)

1 Introduction to the Plan

2 The Principal Response Agency and its Functional Area

3 Risk Assessment for the Area

4 Resources for Emergency Response

5 Preparedness for Major Emergency Response

6 The Command, Control and Co-ordination System

7 The Common Elements of Response

- **Declaring a Major Emergency**
- **Initial Mobilisation**
- **Command, Control and Communication Centres**
- **Co-ordination Centres**
- **Generic Information Management System**
- **Communications Facilities**
- **Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles**
- **Public Information**
- **The Media**

- Site Management Arrangements
- Mobilising Additional Resources
- Casualty and Survivor Arrangements
- Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials
- Protecting Threatened Populations
- Early and Public Warning Systems
- Emergencies arising on Inland Waterways
- Threatened/ actual Emergencies in the Irish Maritime SAR Region
- Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations
- Logistical Issues/ Protracted Incidents
- Investigations
- Community/ VIPs/ Observers
- Standing-Down the Major Emergency

8 Agency Specific Elements and Sub-Plans
9 Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination
10 Links with National Emergency Plans
11 Severe Weather Plans
12 Site- and Event-Specific Arrangements and Plans
13 The Recovery Phase
14 Review of the Major Emergency Plan
15 Appendices.

Validation of Major Emergency Plans

Prior to issue, each Major Emergency Plan should be submitted to the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management. The Framework requires that:

Each principal response agency's individual Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed for inter-operability with the plans of its partner principal response agencies and for consistency with the Framework by the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management.

Any issues arising from this review should be referred back to the principal response agency for appropriate action. In case of disagreement, which is not resolved by local discussion, the National Steering Group should be consulted and should decide the issue.

The Process

The following general process should apply to the preparation of a Major Emergency Plan:

- a person/team with appropriate background, knowledge and experience of emergency management and of the agency should be mandated to prepare the Major Emergency Plan;

- the person/team should be tasked with preparing the plan within a given timescale, and should report to the person with overall responsibility for major emergency preparedness within the agency;
- there should only be one principal Major Emergency Plan within the agency, all other emergency plans should be sub-plans of the Major Emergency Plan;
- the process of developing the plan should include consultation with and input from all relevant sections/services of the agency;
- each section/service of the agency should be responsible for producing the Sub-Plans/Procedures/Code Instructions/Action Cards which are identified as necessary to support the Major Emergency Plan, and having these approved by the person/ team with responsibility for the principal Major Emergency Plan;
- the planning process within each agency should align with the regional process, for example, in terms of the risk assessment ;
- the Major Emergency Plan should be endorsed/approved by the relevant head of the agency so that its status is unambiguous;
- the Major Emergency Plan should be disseminated, with covering instructions, to all sections/services and individuals with a role to play;
- the principal Major Emergency Plan should be prepared so that it can be made available to the public and media.

Drafting a Major Emergency Plan

Every Major Emergency Plan should include the section headings set out above and should address the issues raised under each of the sub-headings in the following pages. While most of the issues are self-explanatory, further clarification may be obtained from the relevant sections of the Framework, the Framework Appendices and the Framework Guidance Documents.

The following general points should inform the drafting of each Major Emergency Plan:

- the Major Emergency Plan should conform with this Guidance, the Framework, its Appendices and other Guidance documents, and be compatible with Major Emergency Plans of other principal response agencies;
- the plans should be written in clear, unambiguous language, avoiding bureaucratic or technical jargon and acronyms;
- the plan should strike a balance between including necessary detail and making reference to other documents, such as separate protocols and procedures;
- the plan should address the risk base and vulnerabilities described by the agency's risk assessment process;

- the plan should take account of the geography and infrastructure of the area and any relevant local or regional planning considerations;
- the plan should summarize the resources available to be used in response to emergency; (i.e. identify Garda/ Fire/ Ambulance Stations, Hospitals etc.)
- the plan should specify clearly (or refer to a protocol/procedures/action cards which do so) the roles and activities of every service/participant with a responsibility in the response. The plan should facilitate, as far as possible, the extraction of detail on their roles and activities by all services, groups and individuals;
- the agency's internal command, control and co-ordination arrangements should be clearly specified; (including arrangements for the agency's Crisis Management Team)
- the plan should specify procedures and protocols to be used to activate the plan, mobilise resources and manage any emergency; and,
- the plan should be suitably illustrated with maps and diagrams to explain and support its contents.

Plan Structure and Contents

The following pages outline the structure and contents of a typical Principal Response Agency Plan.

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Contents

Section 1 Introduction to Plan

The Major Emergency Plan should include an introductory section that includes:

- an introduction to the plan by the Chief Superintendent, in the case of a Division of An Garda Síochána; the Regional Director of Operations, in the case of each Health Service Executive Region; the political head and the City or County Manager in the case of each Local Authority. This introduction should summarise the commitment to effective Major Emergency Management;
- a reference to the Major Emergency Plan being prepared in accordance with requirements of the Government decision and being consistent with 'A Framework for Emergency Management'(2006).
- the objectives of the Major Emergency Plan

    - o Protection and care of the public at times of vulnerability
    - o Clear leadership in times of crisis
    - o Early and appropriate response
    - o Efficient, co-ordinated operations
    - o Realistic and rational approach, capable of being delivered
    - o Transparent systems, with accountability
    - o Harnessing community spirit
    - o The ethos of self protection
    - o Maintenance of essential services
    - o Safe working

- the scope of the Major Emergency Plan and the situations/conditions in which the Plan will be activated;
- the relationship/inter-operability of the Major Emergency Plan with other emergency plans;
- the language/terminology of the Plan;
- the distribution of the Plan;
- the status of the Plan and when and how it will be reviewed/updated
- public access to the Plan

Section 2 The Principal Response Agency and its Functional Area

The Major Emergency Plan should include a section describing, in general terms, both the agency and the functional area covered by the Plan. This section should:

- introduce the agency, its functions in emergency management, and its response capability (in general high-level terms);
- introduce the boundaries and characteristics of area;

- introduce partner principal response agencies and their assigned functions in major emergencies; and,
- introduce the region to which the principal response agency belongs for major emergency preparedness purposes, and the areas from which it may receive mutual aid (or may contribute aid to) via the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination.

Section 3 Risk Assessment for the Area

The Major Emergency Plan should include a section describing briefly the main characteristics of the principal response agency's functional area, from a major emergency perspective. This section should be derived from the risk assessment process undertaken in accordance with Section 2 of the Framework and should contain the output from that process to include the following:

- a summary of the risk assessment and a reference to its location;
- the general and specific risks that may be faced locally and regionally;
- a list of the scenarios selected as exemplars on which preparedness is based; and
- a list of any site/event specific emergency plans that exist or are required (further detail is required in section 12). This section should highlight the links between these plans and the Major Emergency Plan and state the requirement for their compatibility with the Major Emergency Plan.

Section 4 Resources for Emergency Response

The Major Emergency Plan should include a section that:

- describes the structure/resources/services of the agency which may be activated;
- specifies any special staffing arrangements, such as voluntary basis call-in of off-duty staff, and arrangements for managing spontaneous volunteering by staff;
- introduces other organisations/agencies that may be mobilised to assist the principal response agency, such as:

    - The Defence Forces
    - Civil Defence
    - The Irish Red Cross
    - Voluntary Emergency Services
    - The community affected
    - Utilities
    - Private Sector

- describe how mutual-aid will be sought from neighbours;
- introduce the regional level of co-ordinated response; and,
- introduce the arrangements for seeking national/international assistance where required.

Section 5 Preparedness for Major Emergency Response

The Major Emergency Plan should contain a section that sets out the steps taken to ensure preparedness for major emergencies within the agency, including:

- the incorporation of major emergency management into the agency's business planning process;
- the assigning of responsibility for leading preparedness, both within the agency itself and inter-agency;
- the documentation of a major emergency development programme to ensure that the agency has the necessary arrangements, systems, people and resources in place to discharge the functions assigned to it by the Framework;
- the nomination of competent individuals and alternates to the key roles identified in the plan;
- the development of Support Teams for Key Roles and the preparation of Operational Protocols and Action Cards setting out the arrangements which will enable the agency's Support Teams to be mobilised and function;
- the implementation of a comprehensive training and development programme for those staff holding Key Roles and staff who will make a contribution via Support Teams;
- the implementation of an internal exercise programme, with clearly defined and progressive objectives, to validate the agency's preparedness for responding;
- the implementation of joint/inter-agency training and exercise programmes with its partner agencies in the Major Emergency Region;
- the allocation of specific resources, including a budget for preparedness;
- the arrangements to authorise procurement and use of resources (including engaging third parties) to assist in the response to major emergencies; and,
- the arrangements for the annual appraisal of preparedness within the agency and for the submission of that appraisal to the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management and National Headquarters/Parent Department.

Section 6 The Generic Command, Control and Co-ordination Systems

The Major Emergency Plan should contain a section that illustrates and describes hierarchies and relationships between the various elements that make up the response. These may be set out fully in separate referenced documentation but should contain the following headings:

- Command Arrangements:
  - o Within individual services belonging to the agency;

- Control Arrangements:
  - o Of all services/sections of the agency which respond. This should include the decision making mandates of the agency's Controller of Operations, the On-Site Co-ordinator and the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group and include the arrangements for the Crisis Management Team at agency headquarters;
  - o Of external organisations/agencies mobilised to assist the agency during the response;
  - o Support arrangements for the control function;

- Co-ordination Arrangements
  - o Introduce the lead agency concept and the pre-determined and default arrangements for establishing a lead agency for co-ordination purposes;
  - o Specify how the agency will perform the On Site Co-ordination function, including arrangements for support teams;
  - o Specify how the agency will perform the co-ordination function at the Local Co-ordination Centre;
  - o Specify how co-ordination is to be achieved in other specific circumstances:
    - How mutual aid and regional level co-ordination will operate;
    - How links with National Emergency Plans will operate;
    - How links with Government Departments will work.

Section 7 The Common Elements of Response

The Major Emergency Plan should contain a section, with relevant sub-sections, setting out how the following common elements of the response to any major emergency will be implemented.

Declaring a Major Emergency

- Set out the arrangements for declaring a major emergency and activating the provisions of the Major Emergency Plan in accordance with Section 5.1 of the Framework (See Part 1 of this Document);
- The standard format of the information message METHANE should be set out in the Plan.

Initial Mobilisation

- Set out how the agency's initial mobilisation of resources will take place. The agency's Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure should be detailed in Appendix 1 of the Plan. (This appendix will not be publicly accessible)

Command, Control and Communication Centres

- Specify which Command, Control and Communication Centre(s) will be used to mobilise, support and monitor the Principal Emergency Services, and other services of the agency and briefly describe these.

Co-ordination Centres

- Specify how On-Site Co-ordination is to be supported including the mobilisation of a dedicated co-ordination vehicle where applicable;
- Specify where and how the agency's Crisis Management Team will operate; and
- Specify the location of pre-determined Local Co-ordination Centres, which are within the functional area, how these are to operate, and how the agency will support these if it "owns" the Local Co-ordination Centre.

Generic Information Management System

- Specify how Information Managers will be selected and activated; and
- Specify how the common information management system will be used and how Information management will be supported within, and transferred between, the various coordination centres.

Communications Facilities

- Outline the communications systems that each element of the agency (including its emergency services) relies on, and describe these briefly, including communication protocols and procedures;
- Specify the mechanisms for inter-agency communication on site, including protocols and procedures; and
- Outline the arrangements for communications between Site and Co-ordination Centres.

Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles

- Indicate how the lead service nomination is to be reviewed and transferred, if appropriate; and
- Indicate how the agency will organise and deliver the co-ordination function during Major Emergencies where it is the "lead agency"

Public Information

- Specify the agency's role in situations where early warning and special public warning arrangements are needed;
- Specify arrangements for the provision of telephone/help line/information line contact numbers, and handling of contacts with dedicated telephone lines;
- Outline the steps to be taken by the agency to inform the public as to what action they should take in the event of becoming involved in an emergency situation;
- Reference should be made to any National/ locally distributed publications that may assist the public during an emergency. (i.e. the Office of Emergency Planning handbook).

The Media

- Outline arrangements for liaison with the media (ref: Guidance Document 5: *A Guide to Working with the Media*);
- Outline arrangements for media on-site;
- Outline arrangements for media at Local and/or Regional Co-ordination centres;
- Outline arrangements for media at, or adjacent to, other locations associated with the major emergency e.g. agency headquarters, hospitals and mortuaries.

Site Management Arrangements

- Specify the generic site management elements/ arrangements, and specify the agency's role in making decisions about these arrangements as well as disseminating and implementing them;
- Specify how control of access is to operate, and how the personnel and services of the agency are to be identified at the various locations associated with the emergency;
- *Garda only* – Specify how air exclusion zones are to be determined and implemented, via the Irish Aviation Authority, as appropriate

Mobilising Additional Resources

- Specify the arrangements for mobilising organisations that may carry out/ provide support to the agency. Where the Framework or its Appendices require that the mobilisation of an external organisation/agency should be through the Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure of another principal response agency this should be stated here. External organisations/agencies that should be referenced in this section include:

- Defence Forces;
- Civil Defence;
- The Irish Red Cross;
- Voluntary Emergency Services;
- Utilities;
- Private Sector.

- Specify arrangements for liaison with utilities;
- Specify arrangements for integration of casual volunteers as appropriate;
- Specify arrangements for command, control, co-ordination, integration and demobilisation of organisations mobilised to the site;
- Specify how mutual aid arrangements are to operate;

Casualty and Survivor Arrangements

- General
  - Specify arrangements for the rescue and care of Casualties and Survivors and the agency's role in this;

- Injured
  - Specify arrangements for the triage, treatment and transport to hospital, where necessary, of injured persons, and the agency's role in this;
  - Specify arrangements for transporting lightly injured and uninjured persons from the site, and the agency's role in this;
  - *Health Service Executive only*: Specify arrangements for a Casualty Clearing Station, Ambulance Loading Point, the designation of Receiving Hospitals; give general strategies for the distribution of injured casualties

- Fatalities
  - Describe the Coroners role and how the agency supports this;
  - Specify arrangements for dealing with fatalities, both on and off-site, including Body Holding Areas and Temporary Mortuaries, and the agency's role in this;
  - Specify arrangements for identification of the deceased, and the agency's role in this;

- Survivors
  - Specify arrangements for dealing with uninjured survivors who require support, including the designation and operation of Survivor Reception Centres;

- Casualty Information
  - *An Garda Síochána only*: Specify how Casualty Bureau is to operate;
  - *Health Service Executive and Local Authority only*: Outline how the Casualty Bureau is to operate and how this agency will assist An Garda Síochána in the collection and collation of casualty information;
  - *An Garda Síochána and Health Service Executive only*: Specify how information on Casualties is to be transferred to An Garda Síochána by the Health Service Executive, including the role of the Garda Casualty Information Officer at the Receiving Hospital(s) and how this is facilitated by the hospital(s).
  - Outline the procedure, purpose and details of triage colour labeling and cards;

- Friends and Relatives Reception Centres
  - Specify how friends and relatives of casualties are to be provided for, and the agency's role in this;

- Non-National Casualties
  - Specify arrangements for situations which involve non-national casualties and the agency's role in this, including foreign language communication resources;

- Pastoral and Psycho-social Care
  - *Health Service Executive only*: Specify pastoral and psycho-social support arrangements for Casualties and other affected members of the public.

Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials

- Outline arrangements for dealing with major Hazardous Materials incidents and the agency's role in this;
- Specify arrangements for dealing with CBRN incidents and the agency's role in this;
- Link the Major Emergency Plan with the Sub-Plan/Protocol/Code Instruction for dealing with biological incidents (such as the suspected Anthrax incidents of 2001);
- Link the Major Emergency Plan with the Sub-Plan on response to activation of the National Pandemic Influenza Plan;
- Link the Major Emergency Plan with the Sub-Plan on response to activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents;
- Specify arrangements for clinical, personnel and mass decontamination and the agency's role in each.

Protecting Threatened Populations

- Specify how decisions in this regard are to be made and implemented, and the agency's role in this;
- Identify and specify evacuation arrangements, including evacuee reception centres, accommodation and welfare arrangements, and the agency's role in this;
- *Health Service Executive only*: Specify arrangements for the involvement of the Public Health service where appropriate.

Early and Public Warning Systems

- Specify how the agency monitors potentially hazardous situations and decides when to issue warnings, and how these warnings are to be created;
- Specify how warnings are to be disseminated.

Emergencies arising on Inland Waterways

- Specify local arrangements for liaison with the Irish Coast Guard
- Each agency's Plan should note that the Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to inland waterway emergencies.

Threatened or actual emergencies in the Irish Maritime SAR Region

- Outline the arrangements for liaison with the Irish Coast Guard in the event of a maritime emergency. (Ref: A Protocol for multi-agency land based response to marine emergencies protocol).

Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations

- Specify that the principal response agency is responsible for safety, health and welfare of its staff, and set out the agency's safety management procedures and preparedness.
- Outline that command support arrangements at the scene of the emergency should assign responsibility for the oversight and management of the safety of the agency's rescue personnel.
- Specify that a 'Danger Area' may be declared at the site, where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations. Specify that the agency is responsible for the health and safety of its staff when they operate within the 'Danger Area'.
- Specify the procedures and evacuation signal for the 'Danger Area'.
- *Local Authority only*: Specify how physical welfare of responders (food, shelter, toilets) is to be provided;
- Outline how agency will provide appropriate psycho-social support for its own personnel.

Logistical Issues/ Protracted Incidents

- Specify arrangements for rotation of front line rescue/field staff;
- Specify arrangements for re-organising normal emergency and other services cover in areas depleted by commitments to the Major Emergency;
- Specify arrangements for initial and ongoing welfare for field staff.

Investigations

- Specify that An Garda Síochána will retain control of site and lead investigations arising from the emergency, and agency's role in supporting this;
- Outline how agency will ensure its emergency response functions are carried out to minimise disruption of evidence, and how personnel will provide information/ chain of evidence for An Garda Síochána;
- *An Garda Síochána only:* Specify how other parties with statutory investigation roles will liaise with An Garda Síochána e.g. Air Accident Investigation Unit, Health and Safety Authority, etc

Community/ VIPs/ Observers

- Outline how links are to be established with communities affected by an emergency;
- Outline arrangements for receiving VIPs who wish to visit;
- Outline arrangements for national/ international observers.

Standing-Down the Major Emergency

- Specify how the status of the emergency, as well as the various services of the agency, will be stood-down;
- Specify how operational debriefing and reporting of activity will be undertaken.

Section 8 Agency Specific Sub Plans

This section of the Major Emergency Plan should refer to the status and method of activation of the sub plans of the Agency Major Emergency Plan, such as Hospital Plans, Pollution Plans, Casualty Bureau Plan, etc., which are listed in Appendix.

Section 9 Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

This section of the Major Emergency Plan should set out how the provisions of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will be invoked and operated. A Model of Section 9 for a typical PRA Major Emergency Plan is included in Part 3.

Section 10 Links with National Emergency Plans[1]

Each Major Emergency Plan should contain a section setting out how:

- The Plan may be activated on request from a body acting under the provisions of one of the following National Emergency Plans:

1 Arrangements involving the principal response agencies in National Emergency Plans will be agreed in the first instance on their behalf through the National Steering Group

- National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents
- National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan
- Animal Health Plan

- The Plan may be activated on request from a Minister of Government in light of an emergency/ crisis situation.

Section 11 Severe Weather Plans

In the case of each Local Authority, the Major Emergency Plan should have a specific Sub-Plan for responding to severe weather emergencies, whether major emergencies are declared or not. The Sub-Plan should include the Local Authority's response plan for

- Flooding Emergencies (Ref: Guidance Document 11: *A Guide to Flood Emergencies);*
- Severe Weather Conditions (Excluding Flooding Emergencies).

Section 12 Site- and Event- Specific Arrangements And Plans

- The Major Emergency Plan should identity sites/events, arising from the risk assessment process described in Section 2 of the Framework, where specific plans/ arrangements exist for responding to emergencies. The Major Emergency Plan should set out the generic arrangements governing the response to such sites/events, whether a major emergency is declared or not, and it should contain reference to the specific plans for the sites/events.
- The Major Emergency Plan should identify sites arising from the European Union (Control of Major Accident Hazard) Regulations, i.e. the 'Seveso Regulations', where specific plans/ arrangements exist for responding to emergencies. The Major Emergency Plan should set out the generic arrangements governing the response to such sites/events and should contain reference to the specific plans for the site. (Ref: Guidance Document 10: Guidance for those Principal Response Agencies that are designated as Local Competent Authorities under SI No 74 of 2006)

Section 13 The Recovery Phase

The Major Emergency Plan should contain a section that deals with the agency's involvement in the recovery phase, including the following co-ordination arrangements:

- Support for Individuals and Communities
  - Outline how individuals and communities affected by the emergency will be supported during the recovery phase

- Outline how public appeals and external aid are to be organised and managed

- Clean-Up
  - *Local Authority only:* Outline arrangements for clean up of sites/removal of debris/decontamination of sites of emergency and the agency's role in this;

- Restoration of Infrastructure and Services
  - Outline how restoration of infrastructure and services is to be achieved, and the agency's role in this including:
    - Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the situation;
    - Procedure for liaison with utilities;
    - How the order of priorities are to be determined;
    - Protection measures against continuing hazards.

Section 14 Review of the Major Emergency Plan

The Major Emergency Plan should contain a section setting out how the plan is to be reviewed and amended as necessary:

- Internally, within the agency, on an annual basis;
- Externally with
  - the other principal response agencies at the Regional Major Emergency Group and
  - by the National HQ/Parent Department;
- After every declaration of a major emergency and activation of the Plan the following aspects should be reviewed and reported upon:
  - The agency's performance of its functions (internal);
  - The co-ordination function (external and jointly with other principal response agencies).

Section 15 Appendices

The Major Emergency Plan should include appendices covering the agency's Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure and any Sub Plans/Procedures/Code Instructions referred to in the plan.

Appendix 1

Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure

The task of implementing the Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure should be assigned to a Command, Control and Communication Centre to make contact with staff/resources/facilities that are to be mobilised. The Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure should spell out the order of mobilisation and may include cascade mobilisation.

Appendix 2

Major Emergency Local Co-ordination Group Mobilisation Procedure

This procedure should provide for contact being made with the nominated members of the Local Co-ordination Group and confirming which Local Co-ordination Centre will be used for the emergency, the time the group will convene and any other arrangements necessary to facilitate the Local Co-ordination Group to perform its functions.

Appendix 3

List of Sub-Plans/Procedures/Code Instructions

Intentionally Blank

Part 3: Plans for Regional Level Co-ordination

The Framework requirement is that:

Each principal response agency should, through the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency management, participate in the preparation of a Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination, which sets out its arrangements to respond at a regional level. Each principal response agency should include relevant aspects of this Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination within its own Major Emergency Plan.

The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination should be consistent with the arrangements set out in the Framework, and be prepared to conform with the guidance set out in this document.

The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination should be reviewed on an annual basis.

In certain circumstances the Framework provides that the local response to a major emergency may be scaled up to a regional level response, where the nature of the major emergency is such that:

- **the resources available in the local area where the incident happens do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner; or**
- **the consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area; or**
- **the incident(s) is spread across more than one Local Authority or Division of An Garda Síochána; or**
- **the incident occurs at or close to a boundary of several of the principal response agencies.**

Activation of Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

During a major emergency which satisfies one or more of the criteria listed above, the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination.

The key impact of a declaration of a regional level emergency is that extra principal response agencies (other than the Garda Division, HSE Area and Local Authority which are initially involved) are brought fully into the response and their Major Emergency Plans are activated.

The chair of the Local Co-ordination Group, in consultation with the chair of the On-Site Co-ordinating Group and the other members of the Local Co-ordination Group, will decide which extra principal response agencies will be activated, in light of the circumstances prevailing or likely to develop.

Note: In many Major Emergency situations, neighbouring Garda Divisions, HSE Areas and Local Authorities will provide support and resources to the Garda Division, HSE Area and Local Authority, which are primarily involved in the response. Such support is not equivalent to the activation of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination and, in fact, will often precede the activation of the regional plan.

Response Region

The areas covered by the principal response agencies which are activated under the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will constitute the response region for the emergency.

Note: The response region for a regional level major emergency need not coincide (and in many cases will not coincide) with one of the predetermined Major Emergency Management Regions set out in Appendix F4 of the Framework.

Regional Co-ordination Group

The chair of the Local Co-ordination Group (having declared the regional level emergency) will convene and chair the meeting of the Regional Co-ordination Group. The Regional Co-ordination Group will, in effect, comprise the Local Co-ordination Group, augmented with representatives from the extra principal response agencies, which have been activated as part of the regional response. The Regional Co-ordination Group will usually meet in the same Local Co-ordination Centre, where the Local Co-ordination Group is meeting. However, it may, depending on prevailing circumstances, decide to meet at another of the predetermined Local Co-ordination Centres within the response region.

Methods of operation

When the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination is activated, the methods of operation of the principal response agencies at the site will be those set out for standard major emergencies in the Framework, subject only to the fact that additional principal response agencies will be present. Likewise, the methods of operation of the Regional Co-ordination Group will be those set out for the Local Co-ordination Group in both the Framework and the relevant Appendices.

Wide Area Major Emergencies

Some major emergency events (eg. severe storms, extensive flooding and/or blizzards) may impact over a wide area and, in such a situation, a number of Local Co-ordination Groups may be activated. Where the chair of a Local Co-ordination Group, which has been activated in response to a major emergency, becomes aware that one or more other Local Co-ordination Groups have also been activated, contact should be made with the other chair(s) with a view to considering the establishment of a Regional Co-ordination Centre. Such a Regional Co-ordination Centre will normally be located at the Local Coordination Centre which, in the view of the chairs, is best positioned (in terms of resources, communications and geography) to co-ordinate the activity of the different

Local Co-ordination Groups which are active. In such a situation, these Local Coordination Groups will continue to act as per standard arrangements and will communicate with the Regional Co-ordination Centre through their chairs.

Note: During a wide area major emergency, each Local Co-ordination Group will be in contact with the lead Government Department (in accordance with Section 5.4.5.5 of the Framework) and, in such a situation, the decision on whether the activities of a number of Local Co-ordination Groups should be co-ordinated via a Regional Coordination Centre or via the lead Government Department will be taken in light of the prevailing circumstances.

Model Plan

PLAN FOR REGIONAL LEVEL CO-ORDINATION

of the . . (name). . Major Emergency Management Region

Model Plan

1 Introduction

This is the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination of the . .(name) . . Major Emergency Management which has been prepared in accordance with he requirements of "*A Framework for Major Emergency Management*" (2006)

This plan was approved by the . . (name) . . Regional Steering Group on MEM at a meeting on . . . (date). . . and became operative on . . . (date). . .

In some situations where a major emergency has been declared and the Major Emergency Plans of the principal response agencies have been activated, it may be appropriate to consider scaling up from a local response to a regional level response. This may occur when:

- the resources available in the local area where the incident has happened do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner; or
- the consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area; or
- the incident(s) is spread across more than one Local Authority or Division of An Garda Síochána; or
- the incident occurs at or close to a boundary of several of the principal response agencies.

2 Regional Response

2.1 Decision to Scale up to a Regional Level Response

The decision to scale up from a local to a regional level response will be taken by the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group, in consultation with the chair of the On-Site Co-ordinating Group and the other members of the Local Co-ordination Group. This consultation may occur at a meeting of the Local Co-ordination Group, where such a group is in session or, alternatively, by means of a telephone conference call. This decision will, by definition, involve specifying those extra principal response agencies which are to be involved in the regional response.

Note: In many Major Emergency situations, neighbouring Garda Divisions, HSE Areas and Local Authorities will provide support and resources to the Garda Division, HSE Area and Local Authority, which are primarily involved in the response. Such support is not equivalent to the activation of the Plan for Regional Level Coordination and, in fact, will often precede the activation of the regional plan.

2.2 Response Region

The areas covered by the principal response agencies which are activated under the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will constitute the response region for the emergency.

Note: The response region for a regional level major emergency need not coincide (and in many cases will not coincide) with one of the predetermined Major Emergency Management Regions set out in Appendix F4 of the Framework.

2.3 Activation

Once the decision has been taken, the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group will declare that a regional level emergency exists and will activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination by:

- notifying each of the principal response agencies involved that the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination has been activated;
- requesting that each of the principal response agencies, which has not already activated its MEM Plan, should do so;
- delivering an information message to each principal response agency using the mnemonic METHANE; and
- providing each of the principal response agencies involved with a list of the agencies which are being activated to form the regional response

3 Command Control and Co-ordination of Response

3.1 Command and Control Arrangements on Site

The command and control arrangements at the site(s) of a regional major emergency will be the same as those for a standard major emergency including:

- three Controllers of Operation;
- a lead agency determined in accordance with the Framework; and
- an On-Site Co-ordinating Group
- an On-Site Co-ordinator

In situations where more than one principal response agency from a particular service is represented at the site, Appendix F7 makes it clear that there will be only one Controller of Operations from that service and the unit from which the Controller of Operations will come should be determined in accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix F7

3.2 The Regional Co-ordination Group

The mobilisation and operation of the Regional Co-ordination Group will be as per the arrangement for Local Co-ordination Groups set out in Section 5.4.5.2 of the Framework.

Regional Co-ordination Group arrangements for

- the mobilisation of other organisations/agencies;
- requesting mutual aid from neighbours;
- requesting national/international assistance where required;
- dealing with multi site or wide area emergencies;
- linkage to national emergency plans;
- links with Government;
- support for chairs by Information Managers, etc; and

- communication arrangements with the site, and with other groups will be as for a Local Co-ordination Group.

4 Wide Area Major Emergencies

Some major emergency events (eg. severe storms, extensive flooding and/or blizzards) may impact over a wide area and, in such a situation, a number of Local Co-ordination Groups may be activated. Where the chair of a Local Co-ordination Group, which has been activated in response to a major emergency, becomes aware that one or more other Local Co-ordination Groups have also been activated, contact should be made with the other chair(s) with a view to considering the establishment of a Regional Co-ordination Centre. Such a Regional Co-ordination Centre will normally be located at the Local Coordination Centre which, in the view of the chairs, is best positioned (in terms of resources, communications and geography) to co-ordinate the activity of the different

Local Co-ordination Groups which are active. In such a situation, these Local Coordination Groups will continue to act as per standard arrangements and will communicate with the Regional Co-ordination Centre through their chairs.

Note: During a wide area major emergency, each Local Co-ordination Group will be in contact with the lead Government Department (in accordance with Section 5.4.5.5 of the Framework) and, in such a situation, the decision on whether the activities of a number of Local Co-ordination Groups should be co-ordinated via a Regional Coordination Centre or via the lead Government Department will be taken in light of the prevailing circumstances.

Model of Section 9 of PRA Major Emergency Plan

Section 9 – Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

9.1 Introduction

In some situations where a major emergency has been declared and the Major Emergency Plans of the principal response agencies have been activated, it may be appropriate to consider scaling up from a local response to a regional level response. This may occur when:

- the resources available in the local area where the incident has happened do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner; or
- the consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area; or
- the incident(s) is spread across more than one Local Authority or Division of An Garda Síochána; or
- the incident occurs at or close to a boundary of several of the principal response agencies.

9.2 Regional Response

9.2.1 Decision to Scale up to a Regional Level Response

The decision to scale up from a local to a regional level response will be taken by the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group, in consultation with the chair of the On-Site Co-ordinating Group and the other members of the Local Co-ordination Group. This consultation may occur at a meeting of the Local Co-ordination Group, where such a group is in session or, alternatively, by means of a telephone conference call.

This decision will, by definition, involve specifying those extra principal response agencies which are to be involved in the regional response.

Note: In many Major Emergency situations, neighbouring Garda Divisions, HSE Areas and Local Authorities will provide support and resources to the Garda Division, HSE Area and Local Authority, which are primarily involved in the response. Such support is not equivalent to the activation of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination and, in fact, will often precede the activation of the regional plan.

9.2.2 Response Region

The areas covered by the principal response agencies which are activated under the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will constitute the response region for the emergency.

Note: The response region for a regional level major emergency need not coincide (and in many cases will not coincide) with one of the predetermined Major Emergency Management Regions set out in Appendix F4 of the Framework.

9.2.3 Activation

Once the decision has been taken, the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group will declare that a regional level emergency exists and will activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination by:

- notifying each of the principal response agencies involved that the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination has been activated;
- requesting that each of the principal response agencies, which has not already activated its MEM Plan, should do so;
- delivering an information message to each principal response agency using the mnemonic METHANE; and
- providing each of the principal response agencies involved with a list of the agencies which are being activated to form the regional response

9.3 Command Control and Co-ordination of Response

9.3.1 Command and Control Arrangements on Site

The command and control arrangements at the site(s) of a regional major emergency will be the same as those for a standard major emergency including:

- three Controllers of Operation[1];
- a lead agency determined in accordance with the Framework; and
- an On-Site Co-ordinating Group
- an On-Site Co-ordinator

9.3.2 The Regional Co-ordination Group

The mobilisation and operation of the Regional Co-ordination Group will be as per the arrangement for Local Co-ordination Groups set out in 5.4.5.2.

Regional Co-ordination Group arrangements for

- the mobilisation of other organisations/agencies;
- requesting mutual aid from neighbours;
- requesting national/international assistance where required;

[1]In situations where more than one principal response agency from a particular service is represented at the site, Appendix F7 makes it clear that there will be only one Controller of Operations from that service and the unit from which the Controller of Operations will come should be determined in accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix F7

- dealing with multi site or wide area emergencies;
- linkage to national emergency plans;
- links with Government;
- support for chairs by Information Managers, etc; and
- communication arrangements with the site and with other groups

will be as for a Local Co-ordination Group.

9.4 Wide Area Major Emergencies

Some major emergency events (eg. severe storms, extensive flooding and/or blizzards) may impact over a wide area and, in such a situation, a number of Local Co-ordination Groups may be activated. Where the chair of a Local Co-ordination Group, which has been activated in response to a major emergency, becomes aware that one or more other Local Co-ordination Groups have also been activated, contact should be made with the other chair(s) with a view to considering the establishment of a Regional Co-ordination Centre.

Such a Regional Co-ordination Centre will normally be located at the Local Co-resources, communications and geography) to co-ordinate the activity of the different Local Co-ordination Groups which are active. In such a situation, these Local Co-ordination Groups will continue to act as per standard arrangements and will communicate with the Regional Co-ordination Centre through their chairs.

Note: During a wide area major emergency, each Local Co-ordination Group will be in contact with the lead Government Department (in accordance with Section 5.4.5.5 of the Framework) and, in such a situation, the decision on whether the activities of a number of Local Co-ordination Groups should be co-ordinated via a Regional Co-ordination Centre or via the lead Government Department will be taken in light of the prevailing circumstances.



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