
Offaly County Council

MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN



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Section 1

Introduction to Plan

1.1 An Introduction to the Plan

Offaly County Council has historically been at the forefront of Emergency Planning and we are delighted to maintain this position with the New Framework document. We anticipate that this plan will enable Offaly County Council to fulfil our commitments locally, regionally and nationally in the area of Major Emergency Management. This plan will integrate with those of our colleagues in the other principal response agencies, namely; An Garda Síochána and The Health Service Executive.

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government decision and is consistent with 'A Framework for Emergency Management' (2006). It is issued for the guidance of personnel within Offaly Local Authority that may be involved in a major emergency situation, with the aim of providing a basis for standard procedures and coordinated effort in the protection of life and property, to minimize disruption to the functional area and to provide immediate support to those affected.

The emergency plan outlines the systems which are in place to enable all of us to respond in a calm and professional manner to take positive action quickly to mitigate the effects of any incident.

One of the most predictable things in life is that the unexpected will sometimes happen. It is inevitable that every year many incidents will occur within our district which will disrupt our normal routine. Some of these may have little impact on the local community; others may require the activation of a plan to deal with emergencies which are beyond the normal capabilities of the Local Authority. All emergencies are different and they can serve as a test of an organisation and the skill and expertise of its staff.

The most important thing is to be prepared to respond quickly to restore order and normality, learn from the experience and instill confidence both within the Council and amongst the general public. To enable us to do this we need a clear and concise plan to help us deal with any emergency that may arise. These documents set out to do this. The key to success is a co-ordinated and integrated response to an emergency which is why it is essential that all of us read this plan carefully, familiarise ourselves with its contents and recognise our own roles as part of the team responding to the incident.

1.2 Background

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Government policy and is consistent with 'A Framework for Emergency Management (2006)'. The purpose of the new "Framework for Major Emergency Management" is to formalise arrangements for the three Principal Response Agencies, An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities to achieve a more efficient response to any Major Emergency.

This is based on a systems approach which involves a continuous cycle of activity, the principal elements of which are;

- Hazard Analysis/ Risk Assessment;
- Mitigation/ Risk Management;
- Planning and Preparedness;
- Co-ordinated Response; and
- Recovery.



Fig 1.1 Five Stage Emergency Management Paradigm

1.3 The objectives of the Major Emergency Plan

The objectives of the Major Emergency Plan are to protect life and property to minimize disruption to the functional area and to provide immediate support to those affected. To achieve this objective the MEP sets out the basis for a co-ordinated response to a major emergency and lays down the different roles and functions to be performed by the services within the authority.

1.4 The scope of the Major Emergency Plan

The Scope of the Major Emergency Plan is such that the plan provides for a co-ordinated inter-agency response to major emergencies beyond the normal capabilities of the principal emergency services

1.5 The relationship / inter-operability of the Major Emergency Plan with other emergency plans.

The Offaly Local Authority Major Emergency plan should be read in conjunction with other emergency plans and is interoperable with all plans produced by the Principal Response Agencies (PRAs) under the guidance of A Framework for Emergency Management (2006). This includes plans

from An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive, and the Midlands Region Local Authorities; Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath, as well as counties sharing common borders with County Offaly, namely North Tipperary, Roscommon, Galway, Kildare and Meath.

1.6 The language / terminology of the Plan;

A Glossary of Terms used in the Plan is included in Appendix A1.

1.7 The distribution of the Plan

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer, (Major Emergency Management) will be responsible for distribution of the plan following approval of the plan by the Major Emergency Development Committee and Management Team. The plan will be issued to all staff listed in Appendix A2.

1.8 The status of the Plan and when and how it will be reviewed / updated

The plan has been approved by the Major Emergency Development Committee and Management Team. It will be reviewed and updated following the Annual exercises each year.

1.9 Public access to the Plan

The plan will be available in hard copy to the public at Reception Desk, Áras an Chontae and at each area office. A copy of the plan will also be posted on the Offaly County Council's public Internet site.

Section 2

Offaly County Council and its Functional Area

2.1 Role of Offaly County Council in Major Emergency

This plan applies to the functional area of Offaly County Council including Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry Municipal Districts. In the event of a Major Emergency Offaly County Council will provide effective and efficient Emergency Services to manage the emergency in the form of the Fire Service and Civil Defence. Other sections of the Local Authority will as necessary respond to any situation to ensure that the needs of the community are met and to assist partner PRAs to deal effectively with the emergency. The Local Authority will also endeavour to maintain essential services throughout the emergency and assist with the recovery phase in the aftermath of the incident.

2.2 Boundaries and Characteristics of the Area

Offaly is located in the midland region of Ireland and is approximately 2000 km² in area. It has a population of 70,000 with 15,000 living in Tullamore, the County capital. Birr and Edenderry are the other two main towns in the county.

2.3 Partner principal response agencies.

An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive are the principal partner response agencies in relation to this plan.

2.4 Regional Emergency Preparedness

There are eight regions for Major Emergency Management purposes and Offaly forms part of the Midlands Region along with Counties Laois, Longford and Westmeath as illustrated below.

These Local Authorities will provide mutual aid to each other in the event of a Major Emergency and will also support the partner PRAs.

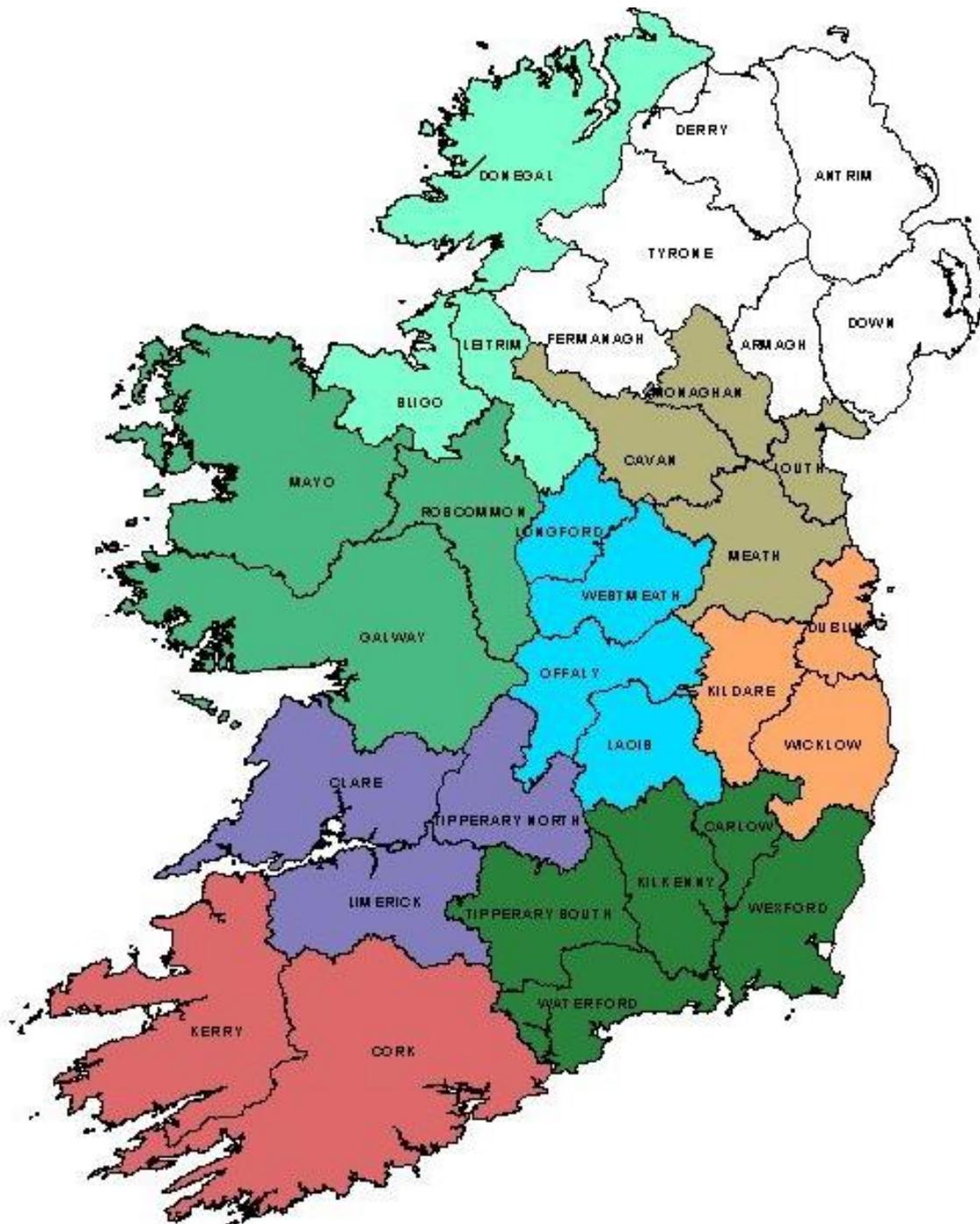


Fig 2.1 MEM Regions

Section 3

Risk Assessment for the Area

3.1 History of area in terms of emergency events.

Offaly County Council has carried out a risk assessment for the area in order to evaluate the specific risks faced by the community. While there are events of an emergency nature regularly within the county, thankfully no event which necessitated the activation of the Major Emergency Plan has occurred.

3.2 The general and specific risks that may be faced locally and regionally.

The Risk Assessment Process undertaken as part of the Framework for Major Emergency Management considered the history of emergency events in the County. The full risk assessment is attached in Appendix B1

3.3 Scenarios selected as exemplars on which preparedness is based.

The process of completing the All Hazard Risk Assessment identified several potential hazards presenting similar risks within the county. It is considered that the planning response strategies for the scenarios recorded as part of the Regional Risk Assessment will represent exemplars for the organisations preparedness for a Major Emergency event.

A regional risk matrix for the Midland Region has been produced following examination of the Risk Assessments prepared by each Local Authority in the region and this matrix is attached in Appendix B2

Some of the scenarios considered include

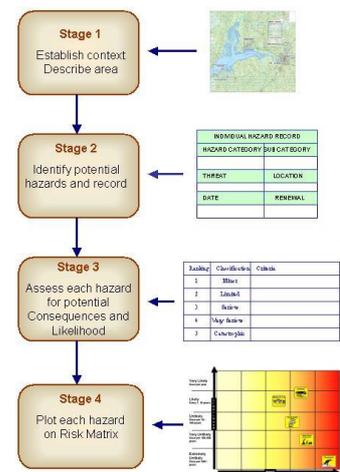
- Flooding
- Major Road Traffic Accident
- Chemical Incident at any industrial premises
- Major Fire
- Civil disorder at large events
- Adverse weather conditions

3.4 Reference to risk management / mitigation / risk reduction strategies, including contacts with risk holders and risk regulators.

The Risk Assessment process resulted in a schedule of Hazards. Risk management / mitigation / reduction strategies are examined where their elimination is not feasible; the risk mitigation measures which are either in place or are required are recorded in Parts 5 and 6 of the Risk Assessment process for each Hazard considered.

The Risk Assessment process comprises four stages as outlined in the Framework document

1. Establishing the context
2. Hazard Identification
3. Risk Assessment
4. Recording potential hazards on a risk matrix



3.5 Associated plans and their compatibility with the Major Emergency Plan.

Appendix D1 contains section plans for each of the Local Authority’s internal departments. The Risk Assessment process recorded some examples of site specific emergency plan for facilities in the county. These include;

- Synergy Health, Tullamore
- O’Connor Park, Tullamore

There are currently no other Event Plans prepared for what are relatively small scale local festivals held at temporary venues around the County.

This Major Emergency Plan will endeavor to inform the bodies who have responsibility for the development of site / event specific emergency plans that such plans should have complementary operating procedures in place.

Section 4

Resources for Emergency Response

4.1 Structure / resources / services of the Council.

Offaly County Council is structured as follows;

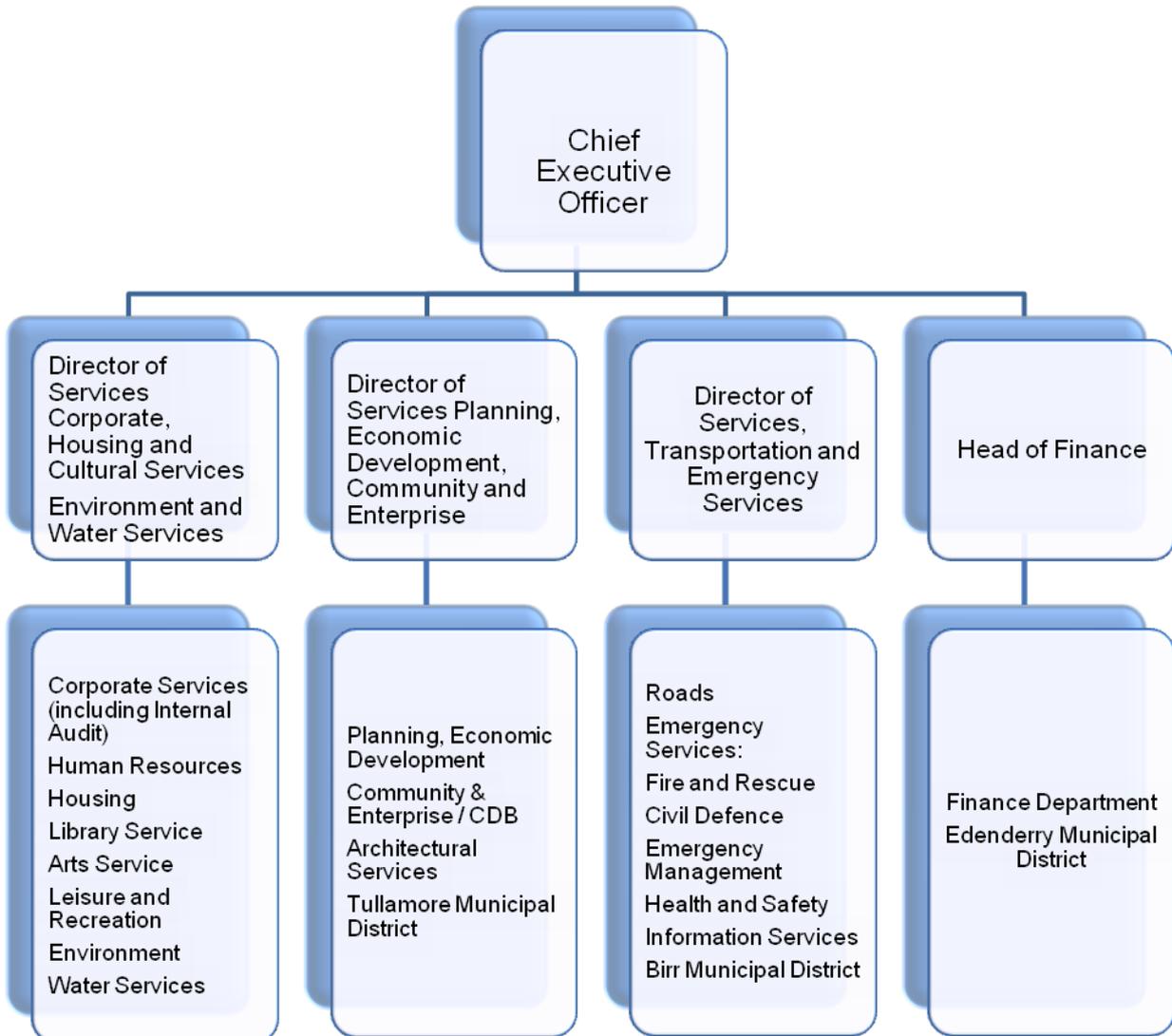


Fig 4.1 Structure of Offaly County Council

All Departments of Offaly County Council will respond and assist at any Emergency as directed by the Controller of Operations

The resources held by all services are listed in Appendix C1

4.2 Special staffing arrangements during a Major Emergency.

Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service will mobilise in accordance with its pre determined attendance procedures. Offaly Civil Defence will mobilise as per its protocols. All other Local Authority staff requested to carry out functions in relation to a Major Emergency will be acting on a voluntary basis subject to their availability.

4.3 Describe how resources of the Council are matched to the functions assigned to it.

Offaly County Council have identified, matched and formally nominated competent individuals and alternates to the key roles to enable the agency to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in its Major Emergency Plan. Support teams are in place for key roles and Operational Protocols setting out the arrangements which will enable the agency's support teams to be mobilised and function in accordance with the arrangements set out in the Major Emergency Plan. Assignment of key roles are documented in Appendix A3

4.4 Other organisations / agencies that may be mobilised to assist

There are a number of agencies that may be mobilised to assist the Council in emergency situations including;

Civil Defence
The Defence Forces
The Irish Red Cross
Order of Malta
The community affected
Utilities
Private Sector

See Appendix A4 for procedures for mobilising Voluntary Emergency Services

4.5 Describe how mutual-aid will be sought from neighbours.

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group (See Glossary Appendix A1) may request assistance from a neighbouring county or declare a Regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination (see Section 9).

4.6 Regional level of co-ordinated response.

In the event of a Regional level response being required, the lead agency which has declared the regional level emergency will convene and chair the Regional Co-ordination Group. Depending on the circumstances, the goal of regional co-ordination may be achieved by using:

- a single Regional Co-ordination Centre; or
- a Regional Co-ordination Centre supported by one or more Local Co-ordination Centres.

The method of operation of a Regional Co-ordination Centre will be similar to the Local Co-ordination Centre.

4.7 National / international assistance where required.

If the incident requires more than the resources available on a regional level the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may request assistance Nationally in accordance with procedures set out in Section 10 for declaring a National Major Emergency.

Section 5

Preparedness for Major Emergency Response

5.0 Preparedness for Major Emergency Response

5.1 The incorporation of major emergency management into the Council's business planning process.

In developing its Corporate Business Plan the Local Authority will take into account the requirement to fully support the Major Emergency Plan by ensuring that all necessary arrangements including systems, personnel and resources are in place to discharge all the functions assigned to it.

The Business Plan will also take into account the continuance of normal day-to-day functions and activities during any major emergency. This will involve acquisition of resources and all training of personnel into the Major Emergency Planning process.

5.2 The assigning of responsibility for leading preparedness, both within the Council and inter-agency.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for all Major Emergency Management arrangements and preparedness through the Director of Service, Transportation and Emergency Services. An Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) with specific responsibility for Major Emergency Management (MEM) who works under the direction of the Chief Fire Officer and is responsible for developing and updating major emergency plans.

5.2.1 Inter-agency

In respect of the inter-agency preparedness it is the responsibility of the Director of Services, Transportation and Emergency Services in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officer, to ensure that the Local Authority's plans are interoperable with the other PRA's

5.3 The documentation of a major emergency development programme

Personnel nominated for Key Roles identified in the Framework are listed in Appendix A3 of this plan, Resources are listed in Appendix C

5.4 Key roles identified in the Major Emergency Plan.

The Key Role appointment holders identified in 5.3 above have identified personnel to form support teams and alternates and are listed in Appendix A3

5.5 Support teams for key roles

The staff nominated for the Key Roles and their support teams identified will undergo a training programme specifically designed to develop their skills and abilities with regard to their individual roles for Major Emergency Management to enable them to discharge their roles efficiently and effectively

5.6 Staff development programme.

The Local Authority will conduct regular exercises in conjunction with ongoing training in order to train and test personnel in the area of Major Emergency Management.

5.7 Training programme.

All personnel involved in the Major Emergency Plan within the organisation will be required to undertake training in order to ensure effective co-operation between agencies during a Major Emergency.

5.8 Internal exercise programme

All personnel involved in the Major Emergency Plan within the organisation will be required to participate in exercises in order to develop their skills in relation to MEM. This will ensure effective co-operation between agencies during a Major Emergency. The exercise programme will follow the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment.

5.9 The implementation of joint / inter-agency training and exercise programmes with its partner agencies in the Major Emergency Region.

All personnel involved in the Major Emergency Plan within the organisation will be required to participate in inter-agency training and exercises in order to ensure effective co-operation between agencies during a Major Emergency. This will be co-ordinated by the midland regional working group and exercise scheduling will follow guidelines as set out in the Framework for Major Emergency Management.

5.10 The allocation of specific resources including a budget for preparedness.

The Chief Executive Officer through the Director of Service for Transportation and Emergency Services will allocate resources for Major Emergency Management.

5.11 Procurement procedures.

The authorisation for the procurement and use of resources is established under the decision making mandates of the Local Authority through the Local Government Act 2001 Part 12 Section 104

5.12 Annual appraisal of preparedness

The Major Emergency Plan will be reviewed annually, following completion of the training exercises and following any activation of the plan, and a revised Major Emergency Management Plan will be issued each year by 30 Nov.

5.13 Steps taken to inform the public as to what action they should take in the event of an emergency.

There may be situations where Offaly County Council needs to provide timely and accurate information directly to the public on an emergency situation where members of the public may perceive themselves and their families to be at risk and are seeking information on actions which they can take to protect themselves and their families.

The Local Co-ordination Group will take over the task of co-ordinating the provision of information to the public as soon as it meets. This activity should be co-ordinated by the lead agency. The Local Co-ordination Group may establish a sub-group for this purpose and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available. This may include the use of dedicated “help-lines”, web-pages, Aertel, automatic text messaging, as well as through liaison with the media.

Section 6

The Generic Command, Control and Co-ordination Systems

6.1 Command arrangements:

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the Local Authority's response to Major Emergencies and will through delegation exercise command over all the County Council's resources in accordance with normal command structures, systems and arrangements.

6.1.1 Within individual services belonging to the Council.

Offaly County Council will exercise command over its own resources in accordance with its normal command structure, systems and arrangements. At the site of an emergency Offaly County Council will exercise control over any additional resources that the Local Authority mobilises to the site (with the exception of the other PRAs)

6.2 Control arrangements:

The head of each Local Authority service shall exercise operational control over his/her own service subject to the overall control and direction of the Controller of Operations.

6.2.1 Control of all services / sections of the Council which respond.

Offaly County Council staff will respond to any Major Emergency in accordance with pre determined agreements. The Crisis Management Team will manage the agency's overall response to the emergency. The Controller of Operations will control all the agency's resources on site.

6.2.2 Control of external organisations / agencies mobilised to assist the Council during the response.

The arrival of external organisations/agencies on site should be immediately notified to the On-Site Co-ordinator who will determine which Controller of Operations will be responsible for their control in accordance with agreed procedures.

6.2.3 Support arrangements for the Control function.

The Crisis Management Team supports their own Controller of Operations on site and maintains the agency's normal day-to-day services that the community requires.

6.3 Co-ordination Arrangements

6.3.1 Lead Agency

The concept of the Lead Agency is accepted as the method for establishing which Agency has initial responsibility for Coordination of all Services on the site of a Major Emergency. The predetermined and default agencies for different types of emergencies are set out in Appendix A4

6.3.2 Specify how the Council will perform the On Site Co-ordination function, including arrangements for support teams.

The primary mechanism used to deliver co-ordination on site is the arrangement for an 'On-Site Co-Ordinator', provided by the Lead Agency as determined in Section 6.3.1.

6.3.3 Specify how the Council will perform the co-ordination function at the Local / Regional Co-ordination Centres

When a Major Emergency is declared the lead agency should mobilise the Local Co-Ordination Group. The representative of the Lead Agency will chair the Local Co-ordination Group and will exercise the mandates associated with this position. In the event of extra resources being necessary the Chair of the LCG may declare a Regional Major Emergency and activate the plan for a Regional Major Emergency. The Regional Co-Ordination Group will meet at one of the pre nominated Co-Ordination centres.

6.3.4 Specify how co-ordination is to be achieved in other specific circumstances.

The lead agency's representative will chair the Local Co-ordination Group where the Local authority is not the Lead Agency. Representatives from other supporting and specialist agencies may be invited to assist in the co-ordination process as required by the Co-Ordination Group.

6.3.4.1 How mutual aid and regional level co-ordination will operate.

Mutual aid arrangements may be implemented if the incident is large enough that assistance is required from neighbouring authorities.

6.3.4.2 How incidents occurring on the Council boundaries are to be dealt with.

The lead agency which has declared the major emergency will convene and chair the Co-ordination Group in the event that an incident occurs at or close to a county boundary.

6.3.4.3 How multi-site or wide area emergencies are to be dealt with.

Where the emergency involves a number of sites or where by its nature the geographical extent is large, it would be recommended that the operation be sectorised and that Sector Commanders be appointed. These Sector Commanders should report directly to the Lead Agency Controller of Operations.

6.3.4.4 How links with National Emergency Plans will operate.

The Offaly MEP will operate as an integral part of any National plans developed for scenarios affecting the population on a National Level

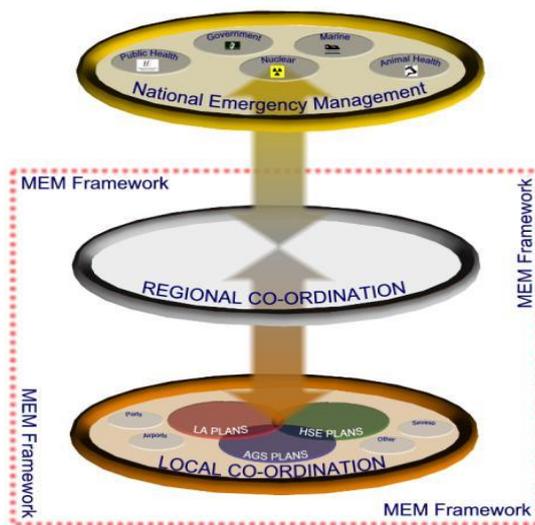


Figure 6.0 Linking Major Emergency Plans with National Plans and other Plans

6.3.4.5 How links with National Government will work.

In every situation where a Major Emergency is declared, each Principal Response Agency should inform its parent Department of the declaration, as part of that agency’s mobilisation procedure. The three parent Departments, should then consult and agree, which Department will be designated as Lead Department, in keeping with the directions set out in A Framework for Major Emergency Planning.

Section 7

The Common Elements of Response

7.0 Sub-sections setting out how the following common elements of the response to any major emergency will be implemented.

- 7.1 Declaring a Major Emergency
- 7.2 Initial Mobilisation
- 7.3 Command, Control and Communication Centres
- 7.4 Co-ordination Centres
- 7.5 Communications Facilities
- 7.6 Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles
- 7.7 Public Information
- 7.8 The Media
- 7.9 Site Management Arrangements
- 7.10 Mobilising Additional Resources
- 7.11 Casualty and Survivor Arrangements
- 7.12 Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials
- 7.13 Protecting Threatened Populations
- 7.14 Early and Public Warning Systems
- 7.15 Emergencies arising on Inland Waterways
- 7.16 Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations
- 7.17 Logistical Issues/ Protracted Incidents
- 7.18 Investigations
- 7.19 Community/ VIPs/ Observers
- 7.20 Standing-Down the Major Emergency

7.1 Declaring a Major Emergency

The Major Emergency Plan should be activated by whichever of the following agencies first become aware of the Major Emergency:

- Local Authority
- Gardai
- Health Service Executive

Local Authority Activation Procedures

The Local Authority Officers authorised to activate plan are Offaly Chief Executive Officer, the Directors of Services or Deputies, the Chief Fire Officer or Rostered Senior Fire Officer and those Officers listed in Appendix A5

The officer activating the Plan is to ensure that the declaration is notified to heads of all services on-site as well as informing the relevant command, control or communication centres.

The officer activating the Plan must do so by means of the following declaratory message:

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 Offaly
County Council Major Emergency Plan.

Once this declaration has been made the officer is to 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 |
| E | Emergency Services present and required. |

The initial mobilisation of Offaly County Council's resources will be facilitated through the Eastern Region Control Centre. The initial response to the activation of the Major Emergency Plan is the attendance of Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service. The initial mobilisation procedure for the Local Authority is detailed in Appendix A6.

7.2 Initial Mobilisation

The Eastern Region Control Centre shall be the control centre to mobilise, support and monitor the Fire Service and other Services requested/required by the Local Authority and shall be the control centre to notify the appropriate personnel in response to the activation of the major emergency plan.

7.3 Command, Control and Communication Centres

In the event of a Major Emergency being declared initial mobilisation will be covered by Eastern Regional Control Centre (ERCC), who will communicate with the personnel on-site until such a time as the Crisis Management Team and Co-ordination Group have been established in accordance with national pre-determined arrangements.

7.4 Co-ordination Centres

7.4.1 On Site Co-ordination Centres

On-site co-ordination is to be supported by means of the Incident Command Vehicle which is held by the Rostered Senior Fire Officer. The Incident Command Vehicle will arrive on site with the Rostered Senior Fire Officer on activation of the major emergency plan.

7.4.2 Crisis Management Team

The Offaly County Council Crisis Management Team will meet at the primary Local Co-ordination Centre at the Council Chamber in Áras an Chontae, Tullamore. The Personnel making up the Crisis Management Team are listed in Appendix A3, Key Roles.

Staff to carry out the administrative and support functions at the local co-ordination centre will be called upon by their respective managers as necessary.

7.4.3 Location of Pre-determined Local Co-ordination Centres

Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, will be the primary Local Co-Ordination Centre for any Emergency Situation requiring the activation of the MEP. A secondary Co-ordination Centre will be located at Central Fire Station, Tullamore in the event that Áras an Chontae is inaccessible due to the nature and location of the major emergency. Please see Appendix D2 for guidance on operation of Local Co-Ordination Centre.

7.4.4 Location of Pre-determined Regional Co-ordination Centres

In the event of a Regional Major Emergency being declared the chair of the Local Co-Ordination group will decide where the Regional Co-Ordination Centre will be located, this will usually be at the most conveniently located Local Co-Ordination Centre. The Regional Co-Ordination Centre will be staffed by the pre determined personnel of that County's Major Emergency support team.

7.4.5 Information Management

The designated personnel will act as Information Manager for the duration of the Major Emergency; Information will be managed through the Information Management system of white boards detailed in the Framework Document.

7.5 Communications Facilities

7.5.1 Emergency services communication facilities:

- Main appliance radio system
- Handheld portable radio sets
- Mobile Phone
- Satellite Phone

7.5.2 Inter-agency Communications on site

The fire service has an Incident Command Vehicle. This vehicle is equipped with the following communications equipment:

- 2 no. UHF radios
- Mobile Phone
- Fax system

This vehicle is mobilised with the Rostered Senior Fire Officer and should be utilised as part of the On-site co-ordination centre as appropriate. It is the responsibility of the fire service to provide a set of functioning hand portable radios, to specifically facilitate inter-agency communication at the site of the major emergency.

7.5.3 Communications between site and Co-Ordination Centres

Communications between the site to the co-ordination centre will be through the controller of Operations and Local CO-Ordination Group, facilitated by way of radio / phone system available to relevant personnel at the time. Satellite phones will be the primary communication system in the event that the Mobile phone system is unavailable.

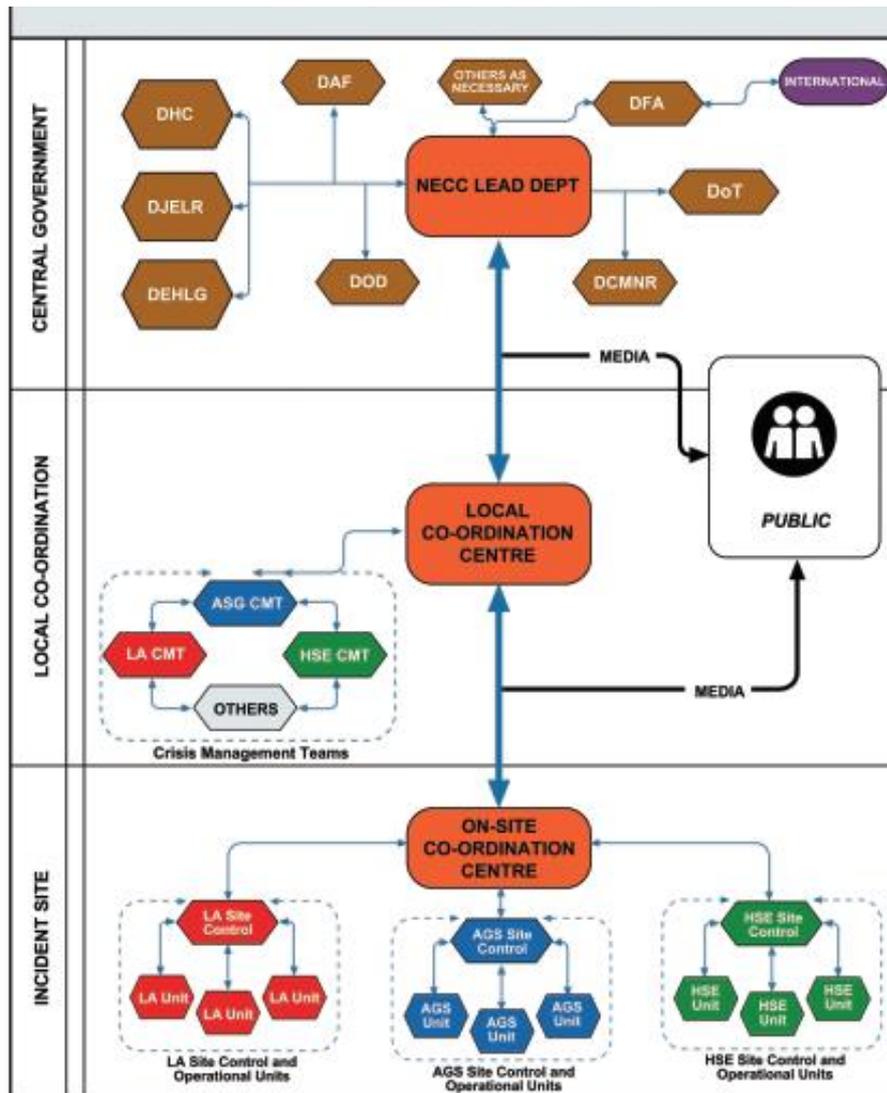


Fig 7.5 Communications Schematic

7.6 Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles

7.6.1 Lead Agency

The lead agency is to be determined in accordance with Section 5.4.2 and Appendix F7 of A Framework for Major Emergency Management (see appendix A4).

There are two mechanisms for determining and designating the lead agency, which are to be applied in sequence by the three Controllers of Operations at the Site. They are as follows:

1. Pre-nomination in accordance with the table provided in Appendix A4. This method pre-nominates the lead agency for various types of incident and this should be the primary method of determination for the lead agency
2. In the event that the emergency does not fall into the categorisations of the table in Appendix A4 then the lead agency by 'default' is the Local Authority (Offaly County Council)

Rapid determination of the lead agency is essential as this in turn determines which of the three Controllers of Operations is to act as the On-Site Co-ordinator.

The Controller of Operations for the Lead Agency is to act as the On-Site Co-ordinator.

The On-Site Co-ordinator should note the time that the determination of the lead agency was made in the presence of the other two Controllers of Operations.

The determination is to be communicated to all parties involved in the response.

7.6.2 Review and transfer of Lead Agency

The lead agency role may change over time, to reflect the changing circumstances of the emergency. Ownership of the lead agency mantle should be reviewed at appropriate stages of the major emergency.

All changes in lead agency designation emanating from the site, and the timing thereof, will be by agreement of the three Controllers of Operations at the site and should be communicated as per the initial determination.

7.6.3 Council's co-ordination function as Lead Agency

In the event of Offaly County Council being assigned the Lead Agency role, it will be assigned the responsibility for the co-ordination function (in addition to its own functions) and it should lead all the co-ordination activity associated with the emergency both on-site and off-site.

The function of the lead agency for any emergency includes:

- ensuring involvement of the three principal response agencies and the principal emergency services in sharing information on the nature of the emergency situation;
- ensuring involvement of the range of organisations (other than principal response agencies) who may be requested to respond in co-ordination activities and arrangements;
- ensuring that mandated co-ordination decisions are made promptly and communicated to all involved;
- ensuring that site management issues are addressed and decided;
- ensuring that public information messages and media briefings are co-ordinated and implemented;
- ensuring that pre-arranged communications (technical) links are put in place and operating;
- operating the generic information management systems;
- ensuring that the ownership of the lead agency role is reviewed, and modified as appropriate;
- ensuring that all aspects of the management of the incident are dealt with before the response is stood down;
- Ensuring that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the emergency after it is closed down, and circulated (first as a draft) to the other services which attended.

7.7 Public Information

7.7.1 Council's co-ordination function as Lead Agency

In certain situations, it may be crucial for the Local Authority to provide timely and accurate information directly to the public on an emergency situation. Members of the public may perceive themselves and their families to be at risk and are seeking information on actions which they can take to protect themselves and their families.

The Local Co-ordination Group should manage the task of co-ordinating the provision of information to the public as soon as it meets. This activity should be co-ordinated by the lead agency.

The Local Co-ordination Group may establish a sub-group for this purpose and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available. This may include the use of dedicated

“help-lines”, web-pages, Aertel, automatic text messaging, as well as through liaison with the media.

7.7.2 Public notices

In situations where early warning and special public warning arrangements are required the Media Liaison Officer shall make provision for contacting the appropriate media outlets for the dissemination of warning(s) on behalf of the local authority.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR BROADCAST OF WARNING IN EMERGENCY_SITUATIONS

RTE News Room may be contacted round-the-clock at the following numbers:

(01) 2082177 or (01) 2082232

Midlands Radio 3 may be contacted at the following numbers:

Tel: 057-935 1333
Fax: 057-935 2444

The appointed Media Liaison Officer shall make arrangements to publicise the emergency telephone numbers and/or the location of public information offices.

7.8 The Media

7.8.1 Media Centre

The media will respond quickly to the scene of any large scale incident occurring and may continue to hold a presence at the scene for an extended period of time. It is the responsibility of the lead agency to establish a Media Centre at or near the site of the emergency for use by the principal response agencies in dealing with the media at the site.

7.8.2 Arrangements for Media on site

Each principal response agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the site and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers on site should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency. The media liaison Officer will;

- be the point of contact for all media enquiries,
- deal with public queries
- Provide information to other agencies
- Be responsible for setting up an information helpline
- Liaise with other Media Liaison Officers

All statements to the media should be prepared by the Media Liaison Officer and approved by the Local Co-ordination Group or Crisis Management Team prior to release to the media.

Duties of Media Liaison Officer are attached in Appendix D8

7.8.3 Arrangements for Media at Local / Regional Co-Ordination Centres

The Local Co-ordination Group should take the lead in terms of working with the media, away from the site, during a major emergency. As with arrangements at the site, each principal response agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the Local Coordination Centre and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency. All statements to the media at this level should be cleared with the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group.

Regular media briefings should be scheduled to suit television and radio broadcasts.

These briefings should also be used to promulgate help-line telephone numbers and necessary public information messages. Background information that has been compiled before the event can be used to inform holding statements for use during the early stages of the incident.

7.8.3 Arrangements for Media at other locations associated with the emergency

In many situations media attention will move quickly away from the site to other locations, including the Local Co-ordination Centre, hospitals where casualties are being treated and mortuaries and, therefore, arrangements for the media at or adjacent to these locations will need to be provided.

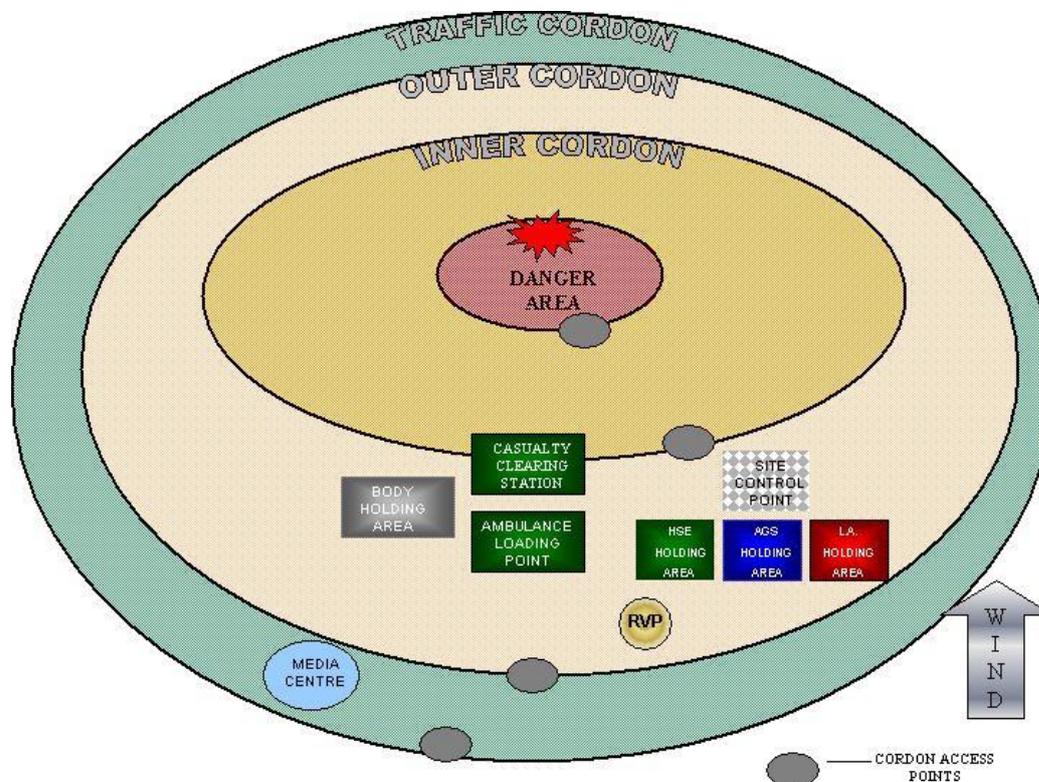
The Local Co-ordination Group should take the lead in terms of working with the media, away from the site. As with arrangements at the site, each PRA should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the Local Coordination Centre and the activities of these officers should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency. All statements to the media at this level should be cleared with the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group.

7.9 Site Management Arrangements

7.9.1 Generic Site Management arrangements

The main components of a typical Site Plan should contain some or all of the following:

- Inner, Outer and Traffic Cordons (established by An Garda Síochána after decision by and/or agreement with On-site Co-ordinator).
- A Danger Area, If appropriate
- Cordon and Danger Area Access Points
- Rendezvous Point
- Site Access Point
- Holding Areas for different services
- Site Control Point
- On-site Co-ordination Centre
- Casualty Clearing Station
- Ambulance Loading Area
- Body Holding Area
- Survivor Reception Centre
- Friends and Relative Reception Centre
- Media Centre



Please refer to Appendix D3 - Idealised Scene Management Arrangements.

7.9.2 Control of access / Identification of personnel

In order to control access to a Major Emergency site cordons will be established as quickly as possible at the site of a major emergency for the following reasons;

- to facilitate the operations of the emergency services and other agencies;
- to protect the public, by preventing access to dangerous areas; and
- to protect evidence and facilitate evidence recovery at the site.

Three cordons will be established. An Inner, Outer and Traffic Cordon, along with access cordon points. *Please refer to Appendix D3 – idealised scene management arrangements*. This will be done by An Garda Síochána after a decision by and agreement with the On-site Co-Ordination Group.

A Danger Area may also be declared where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel, over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations.

➤ Identification of Personnel at the Site of a Major Emergency

All uniformed personnel, responding to the site of a major emergency, should wear the prescribed uniform, including high visibility and safety clothing, issued by their agency. The service markings on this clothing should be made known in advance to the other organisations that may be involved in the response.

Senior personnel who are acting in key roles, such as the On-Site Co-ordinator and the Controllers of Operations, should wear bibs designed and coordinated as follows:

| Organisation | Bib Colour | Wording |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| An Garda Síochána | Blue and White Chequer | Garda Controller |
| Local Authorities | Red and White Chequer | Local Authorities Controller |
| Health Service Executive | Green and White Chequer | HSE Controller |

When the lead agency has been determined, the On-Site Co-ordinator should don a distinctive bib with the words On-Site Co-ordinator clearly visible front and back. Below is an example of how the bibs should look for each of the responding agencies.



➤ Non-Uniformed Personnel

Non uniformed personnel from Offaly County Council should attend the scene in high visibility jacket with the name Offaly County Council and their job function clearly displayed.

7.9.3 Air exclusion zones

Where the principal response agencies consider it appropriate and beneficial, the On-Site Co-ordinator may request, through An Garda Síochána, that an Air Exclusion Zone be declared around the emergency site by the Irish Aviation Authorities. When a restricted zone above and around the site is declared, it is promulgated by means of a “Notice to Airmen” - NOTAM - from the Irish Aviation Authorities.

7.10 Mobilising Additional Resources

7.10.1 Voluntary Emergency Services.

The Voluntary Emergency Services sector can provide additional equipment and support in the event of a major emergency. Details of the local Voluntary Emergency Services, the resources they can provide and their mobilisation procedure are outlined in Appendix C1 Resources and C2 Mobilising Voluntary Emergency Services.

Voluntary Emergency Services will link to the Principal response Agencies in accordance with Table below.

| Principal Response Agency | Linked Voluntary Emergency Service |
|----------------------------------|--|
| An Garda Síochána | Irish Mountain Rescue Association Irish Cave Rescue Association Search and Rescue Dogs Sub-Aqua Teams |
| Health Service Executive | Irish Red Cross Order of Malta Ambulance Corps St. John's Ambulance |
| Local Authority | Civil Defence |

Table 7.10 Principal Response Agencies with Linked VES

Each Principal Response Agency with a linked Voluntary Emergency Services is responsible for the mobilisation of that service and their integration into the overall response. The internal command of volunteer organisations resides with that organisation.

7.10.2 Defence Forces.

Assistance from the Defence Forces may be requested through the Senior Garda present or through the Crisis Management Team. Provision of Defence Forces capabilities is dependent on the exigencies of the service and within available resources at the time.

The Defence Forces -incorporating the Army, Air Corps, Naval Service and Reserve Defence Forces – will operate under their own command and control structure.

7.10.3 Utilities.

Utilities are frequently involved in the response to emergencies, usually to assist the principal response agencies in making situations safe. They may also be directly involved in restoring their own services, for example,

electricity supply in the aftermath of a storm. Utilities operate under their own legislative and regulatory frameworks but, during the response to an emergency, it is important that they are involved in the co-ordination arrangements. Utilities may be requested to provide representatives and/or experts to the On-Site Co-ordination Group, the Local Co-ordination Group and/or the Regional Co-ordination Group, as appropriate. A list of utilities and their emergency/out of hours contact arrangements are listed in Appendix C3 Contact Officers Government and other supporting agencies.

7.10.4 Private Sector.

Private sector organisations may be involved in a major emergency through ownership of the site where the emergency has occurred or through ownership of some element involved in the emergency e.g. an aircraft, bus, factory, etc. They may also be called on to assist in the response to a major emergency, by providing specialist services and/or equipment. Private sector representatives and/or experts may be requested to support the work of the On-Site Co-ordination Group, the Local Co-ordination Group and/or the Regional Co-ordination Group, as appropriate. A list of equipment within the private sector is detailed in Appendix C6.

7.10.5 Requests for external assistance.

The Local Authority Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of the authority do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is expected to be extended, the levels, types and duration of assistance/ support are identified, and that the request for support is passed to either the authority's Crisis Management Team or the Local Co-ordination Centre who will arrange to obtain the support via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring authorities.

7.10.6 Requests for international assistance.

Where resources that are held at a national level are required as part of the management of the incident, requests for those resources should be directed by the lead agency to the Lead Government Department. The European Community has established a Community Mechanism to facilitate the provision of assistance between the member states in the event of major emergencies. The decision to seek assistance from outside the state should be made by the lead agency, in association with the other principal response agencies, at the Local/ Regional Co-ordination Centre. The Local/ Regional Co-ordination Group should identify and dimension the level/type of assistance likely to be required and its duration. The chair of the Local/ Regional Co-ordination Group

should make requests for such assistance to the National Liaison Officer in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

7.11 Casualty and Survivor Arrangements

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, will need to make an early assessment of the casualty situation and identify if there are particular aspects which may impact on casualty management, such as, significant numbers of disabled, sick or immobile persons involved, and take action accordingly.

As well as making provision for casualties and survivors, the principal response agencies should also make arrangements for the reception, facilitation and support of the friends and relatives of some or all of these individuals.

7.11.1 Triage

Triage is a dynamic process of assessing casualties and deciding the priority of their treatment, using a two-stage process of triage sieve and triage sort.

Following initial triage, casualties will normally be labelled, using Triage Cards, and moved to a Casualty Clearing Station.

7.11.2 Casualty Clearing Station

The **Casualty Clearing Station** is established at the site by the Ambulance Service, in consultation with the Health Service Executive Controller and the Site Medical Officer.

Here, casualties are collected, further triaged, treated, as necessary, and prepared for transport to hospital. The Health Service Executive Controller will, in consultation with the Site Medical Officer and the designated receiving hospitals, decide on the hospital destination of casualties.

Where transport to hospital is required this will be provided by the ambulance service. In certain circumstances it may be required to provide the assistance of the Civil Defence to aid in the transport of casualties to hospital.

This will be arranged between the On-Site Co-ordinator and the other two Controllers of Operations.

7.11.3 Fatalities

The bodies of casualties, which have been triaged as dead, should not be moved from the incident site unless this is necessary to effect the rescue of other casualties. The only other circumstance where bodies should be moved, before the Garda evidence collection process is complete, is if they are likely to be lost or damaged due to their location or the nature of the incident.

Bodies to be moved should be photographed first and their original position clearly marked and recorded. The recovery of the dead and human remains is part of an evidence recovery process and, as such, is the responsibility of An Garda Síochána acting as agents of the Coroner. The Local Authority may assist An Garda Síochána in this function.

When a doctor has pronounced an individual dead, arrangements in respect of the body are the responsibility of the local Coroner's Office, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána.

Full information on procedures for dealing with fatalities is set out in Appendix D4 Fatal Casualties, including the Coroner's role.

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, will decide if it is necessary to establish a Body Holding Area at the site. The Body Holding Area, if established, should be situated close to the Casualty Clearing Station.

Officers of An Garda Síochána will staff this area and they will maintain the necessary logs to ensure the continuity of evidence. It should be noted that the Body Holding Area is not the appropriate place for the prolonged storage of the dead and appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure minimal delay in moving bodies to a mortuary (temporary or otherwise).

Where circumstances require it, a Temporary Mortuary may be established. This decision should be made by the Local Co-ordination Group, in consultation with the Coroner.

7.11.4 Casualty Bureau

In the event of a major emergency involving significant numbers of casualties, An Garda Síochána will establish a Casualty Bureau to collect and collate the details (including condition and location) of all casualties and survivors. To facilitate this process, a liaison/casualty officer will normally be sent by An Garda Síochána to each hospital where casualties are being treated.

All other services should ensure that any information collected on any casualty is transferred via An Garda Síochána to the Casualty Bureau.

The Casualty Bureau is the central contact point for the matching of information available on casualties with requests from all those seeking or providing information about persons involved in the incident. The media will be asked to promulgate the contact numbers for the Bureau so that the public can make enquiries and provide information.

7.11.5 Survivor Reception Centre

Where considered appropriate, a Survivor Reception Centre should be designated and established at the earliest possible opportunity. The On-Site Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the other Controllers, should determine if such a centre is to be established, and its location in the site management plan.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to establish and run this centre.

It is a function of the Civil Defence to operate the reception centre and to log all relevant information regarding the survivors attending the centre as well as to cater for the welfare needs of the survivors. The Temporary Accommodation listed in Appendix C4 will be the primary locations for Survivor Reception Centre.

7.11.6 Friends and Relatives Reception Centres

Some incidents may warrant the establishment of Friends and Relatives Reception Centres at appropriate locations associated with the emergency, in addition to those provided at the hospitals where the injured are being treated.

The Local Co-ordination Group should determine the need for and arrange for the designation and operation/staffing of such centres.

The purpose of a reception centre is to provide a comfortable area where friends and relatives of those involved in the incident (primarily the casualties and survivors) can be directed for information. A building used as a Friends' and Relatives' Reception Centre should be secure from media intrusion and contain sufficient room to afford privacy to families receiving information about relatives.

There will also be a need for a reliable process to establish the credentials of friends and relatives.

7.11.7 Non-National Casualties

It is possible that some incidents may involve significant numbers of casualties from other jurisdictions. In such circumstances the Local Co-ordination Centre should notify the relevant embassy if the nationality of the victims is known. The Department of Justice should be approached if assistance is required in obtaining interpreters from private sector providers. The Department of Foreign Affairs (which operates an out of hours Duty Officer System) should also be approached for appropriate assistance and liaison purposes.

7.11.8 Pastoral and Psycho-Social Support

It is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive to provide for the pastoral and psycho-social support arrangements of casualties and other affected members of the public.

7.12 Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials

7.12.1 Arrangements for dealing with major Hazardous Materials incidents

The Local Authority is the lead agency for response to hazardous materials incidents, with the exception of those involving biological agents. Where terrorist involvement is suspected, An Garda Síochána will act as the lead agency. The Defence Forces, when requested, will assist An Garda Síochána in an Aid to the Civil Power role with Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams.

7.12.2 Arrangements for dealing with CCBRN incidents

The principal response agencies will lead the response to these events also; the provisions of the Framework will govern the response to any such incident. The co-ordination and control arrangements set out in the Framework will apply to all hazardous materials incidents, regardless of the origin of the event.

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a CCBRN incident are contained in the DoEHLG Protocol for dealing with incidents involving actual or suspected chemical agents or devices in Ireland, Dublin, (November, 2001).

7.12.3 Arrangements for dealing with Biological incidents

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a biological incident are contained in the Department of Health and Children Protocol, Biological threats - A Health Response for Ireland, Dublin, (May 2002).

7.12.4 National Public Health Plan

For infectious diseases impacting on public health such as; Avian Flu, Pandemic Flu, Foot and Mouth there will be a link to the National Plan as outlined by the government. Offaly County Council will provide assistance under the command of the lead government department.

7.12.5 Nuclear Accidents

In the event of a local radiological emergency or the activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents Offaly County Council will follow the directions detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological/ Nuclear Emergencies (in Draft) Guidance on radiological or nuclear emergencies is available from the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland, with a list of contacts given in Appendix C3 -- Contact Officers in Government Departments and Other Bodies.

7.12.6 Decontamination

Additional issues in relation to decontamination of the public may arise at some hazardous materials incidents. Decontamination in this context refers to a range of procedures employed to remove hazardous materials from people and equipment. It includes terms such as:

- **Clinical decontamination**, meaning medical treatment by health professionals of patients affected by or contaminated with hazardous materials;
- **Emergency decontamination**, when time does not allow for the deployment of specialist resources and it is judged imperative that decontamination of people is carried out as soon as possible;
- **Personnel decontamination** meaning the decontamination of uninjured exposed persons;

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers of Operations, will establish the need for decontamination. The Health Service Executive has responsibility for providing clinical decontamination and medical treatment to casualties affected by hazardous materials. The fire services have responsibility for providing other forms of physical decontamination of persons at the site. The Health Service Executive will be responsible for decontamination where required to protect health service facilities, such as hospitals, from secondary contamination.

Where emergency decontamination of the public is required, the fire service may use its fire-fighter decontamination facilities, or improvised equipment may be used prior to the arrival of dedicated equipment. Where it is decided that persons should undergo this

practice, it should be carried out under the guidance of medical personnel. It should be noted that emergency contamination carries risks for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and the injured. It may be more appropriate in certain circumstances for outer clothing to be removed and blankets provided as a temporary measure to alleviate potential harm through surface contact with contaminants.

7.13 Protecting Threatened Populations

7.13.1 Specify how decisions in this regard are to be made and implemented, and the Council's role in this.

There are circumstances when it may be necessary to protect members the public who are in the vicinity of an emergency event. This protection is usually achieved by moving people temporarily to a safe area, by evacuation where appropriate or feasible, or by advising affected individuals to take shelter in an appropriate place. The On-Site Co-Ordinator will take the decision on how best to protect a threatened population, after consultation with the other Controllers of Operations.

7.13.2 Arrangements for evacuee reception centres, accommodation and welfare.

It is a function of the Local Authority to advise on protection of persons threatened, by sheltering or evacuation, please refer to Appendix C4 for a list of temporary Accommodation Centres within the County.

In some situations, it can be anticipated that there will be a level of self evacuation, and this may need to be considered as part of the emergency management considerations. Where decided upon, the process of evacuation will be undertaken by An Garda Síochána, with the assistance of the other services. If a decision to evacuate is made, then the evacuation tasks will have to be undertaken simultaneously with other emergency response activities such as rescue, fire-fighting and casualty treatment. Evacuation, like other tasks associated with Major Emergency Management, requires inter-agency co-ordination. Please refer to "A Guide to Managing Evacuations" prepared by the MEM Project Team.

7.14 Early and Public Warning Systems

7.14.1 Monitoring potentially hazardous situations

Met Éireann operates a “Public Service Severe Weather Warning” system whereby they notify Local Authorities where weather conditions are forecast to meet specified criteria.

Not all severe weather warnings/events will be a Major Emergency. However if there is a significant risk public warnings will be issued. In certain situations where the forecast weather is sufficiently severe the members of the Crisis Management Team are to be notified.

7.14.2 How warnings are to be disseminated.

All public warnings are to be issued via the designated Media Liaison Officer. The methods of disseminating Public Warnings are similar to those for public information. Please refer to Sections 7.7 Public Information and 7.8 The Media regarding such methods.

7.15 Emergencies Arising on Inland Waterways

7.15.1 Specify local arrangements for liaison with the Irish Coast Guard

The Framework provides that An Garda Síochána should be the principal response agency to undertake initial co-ordination at inland waterway emergencies. After the initial response, this role may be re-assigned, following consultation between the Irish Coast Guard and An Garda Síochána.

Civil Defence may be requested to provide support to the Coast Guard in the carrying out of its functions in respect of emergencies arising on Inland Waterways.

7.15.2 The Plan should note that the Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to inland waterway emergencies

The Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to Inland Waterway emergencies.

The Irish Coast Guard should contact the Civil Defence Officer to facilitate any request for assistance.

Please refer to Appendix C5 - Procedure and Contacts for Mobilising Civil Defence

The Irish Coast Guard and the Garda Sub-Aqua Unit may be contacted through the Controller of Operations, An Garda Síochána.

7.16 Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations

7.16.1 Safety, health and welfare of Council staff,

Each principal response agency (and other responding organisation) is responsible for the Safety, Health and Welfare of its staff responding to emergencies and should operate its own safety (including personal protective equipment) and welfare management procedures.

7.16.2 Safety of the Council's rescue personnel

The OIC of the Fire Service may at his discretion assign the responsibility for Health and Safety to one of the Fire service Personnel if the situation requires and resources permit.

As such all Local Authority Safety and Welfare procedures are applicable to Local Authority staff responding to the Major Emergency.

7.16.3 Operating within a 'Danger Area'.

Each service should establish from the On-Site Co-ordinator if a Danger Area has been defined as part of site management arrangements and, if so, what particular safety provisions may apply.

However, the persons in charge of the activities of these agencies shall, subject to the above, continue to exercise operational control over their agencies activities and shall ensure that all necessary safety and welfare, measures and procedures are implemented.

7.16.4 Procedures and evacuation signal for the 'Danger Area'.

Where a situation deteriorates to a point where the officer in charge of the Danger Area decides that it is necessary to withdraw response personnel from a Danger Area, a signal, comprising repeated sounding of a siren for ten seconds on, ten seconds off, will be given. All personnel should withdraw from the Danger Area on hearing this signal.

7.16.5 Physical welfare of responders (food, shelter, toilets)

The Local Authority Controller should ensure that appropriate rest and refreshment facilities are provided for response personnel at the site, as well as for survivors.

These facilities may include the provision of food and drink and rest facilities by Civil Defence and sanitary facilities as available locally.

7.16.6 Psycho-social support for personnel.

Offaly County Council will arrange to debrief and provide locally any support as necessary for the wellbeing of its entire staff.

7.17 Logistical Issues/Protracted Incidents

7.17.1 Arrangements for rotation of front line rescue / field staff

In the event of the situation being protracted or long term the Chair of the Local Co-Ordination group will in consultation with the other PRA's make all arrangements to ensure an efficient outcome. The controllers shall ensure that all necessary safety and welfare, measures and procedures are implemented for all staff responding to the incident and shall arrange for rotation of staff as necessary.

7.17.2.1 Arrangements for re-organising normal emergency and other services.

The Chair of the Local Co-Ordination group will in consultation with the other PRA's make all arrangements to ensure that normal emergency cover is maintained in areas where resources have been depleted by the major emergency.

7.17.3 Arrangements for initial and ongoing welfare for field staff

The Local Authority Controller should ensure that appropriate rest and refreshment facilities are provided for response personnel at the site, as well as for survivors. Staff welfare will be considered at all times. Civil Defence may be called upon to provide or aid in the administration of such needs. The Local Authority will strive and endeavour to provide meals at all meal times to field staff or every 4/5 hours during an incident.

7.18 Investigations

7.18.1 Investigations arising from an emergency

The following agencies may have an investigative function with regard to Major Emergencies depending on the nature of the incident:

- An Garda Síochána
- Air Accident Investigation Unit
- Health and Safety Authority
- Environmental Protection Agency

An Garda Síochána is responsible for carrying out criminal investigations and in this role may facilitate inquiries carried out by other agencies with an investigative mandate. An Garda Síochána may also be requested to conduct investigations on any aspect of an emergency on behalf of a body charged with holding an inquiry, etc.

If there is reason to believe that a criminal act was a contributory factor to a major emergency, An Garda Síochána will begin an investigation, in parallel with the emergency response.

An Garda Síochána will need to obtain evidence of the highest possible standard and will require that all evidence is left in situ, unless a threat to life or health prevents this.

7.18.2 Minimise disruption of evidence,

The local authority will have some role to play in the site clearance, demolition, clean-up operations, removal and disposal of debris and such activity is only to be done following consultation with and approval of An Garda Síochána (or other investigative body) to avoid the possible unnecessary destruction of evidence.

The preservation of the site of a major emergency, which results from criminal action, is of paramount importance and should receive a priority rating from the outset. The first member(s) of An Garda Síochána to arrive at the site of a major emergency where a suspected crime has been committed automatically incurs the responsibility of preserving the site.

Note: The priority of the response remains the protection of life.

7.18.3 Other parties with statutory investigation roles

Any agency with an investigative mandate should liaise in the first instance with the On-Site Co-ordinator, who will direct them to the Controller of Operations of An Garda Síochána.

In some cases, Protocols and memoranda of Understanding have been established as an effective way of ensuring adequate liaison between different agencies carrying out investigations.

One of the Local Authority functions is to provide support for An Garda Síochána forensic work. This should also extend to investigations carried out by other agencies as appropriate.

It may be necessary for Local Authority staff to provide statements to the investigative agencies on their involvement in the major emergency response.

7.19 Community/VIP's/Observers

7.19.1 How links are to be established with communities affected by an emergency.

Where communities are affected by a major emergency effort should be made to establish contacts/links with a community utilising established links such as Community Groups/ Public Repetitive and Community Liaison Officers within in the community.

7.19.2 Arrangements for receiving VIPs who wish to visit;

Public representatives and other dignitaries may wish to attend the site of the emergency, as well as associated facilities, such as hospitals, to express sympathy on behalf of the public to the injured and bereaved, and to support the emergency response workers.

Visits by dignitaries will usually require security arrangements and liaison with the media. It is important that the organisation of such visits does not distract from the response effort.

Requests for visits to agency specific locations are to be referred to that agency's management.

As a general rule, VIPs are to be advised not to visit sites where dangers still exist or where ongoing rescues are in progress.

All requests for visits to the site or facilities associated with it are to be referred to the Local Co-ordination Group.

7.19.3 Arrangements for national / international observers

Multiple requests may be received from persons/groups who wish to observe the response operations. The presence of experts from other regions or jurisdictions, who wish to act as observers at an incident, can greatly enhance the operational debriefings and facilitate the process of learning lessons from the emergency.

It may be beneficial to have pre-arranged observer teams, both national and international, for this role. The Local Co-ordination Group should make arrangements for any such observers.

7.20 Standing Down the Major Emergency

7.20.1 How the status of the emergency will be stood-down.

This plan may be stood down in any of the following ways depending on the particular circumstances:

1. It may be stood down:
 - a) By the person who activated the plan when an emergency which was imminent does not actually occur.
 - b) By the Controller of Operations in respect of local authority activities at the site of the emergency following consultation with the On-Site Co-ordinator or
 - c) By the designated local authority representative on the co-ordinating group in respect of local authority activities other than those at the site.
2. The plan may be stood down generally following agreement by the three principle response agencies responding to the emergency or in respect of all or certain local authority services following consultation with the other principle response agencies.

The following additional provisions apply to standing down the emergency:-

- Before standing down this plan, the Controller of Operations shall advise the local authority representative on the local co-ordinating group,
- Even after this plan has been stood down, certain local authority services may be required to continue carrying out activities related to the emergency and in such circumstances full control shall revert to the heads of those services.

7.20.2 Operational debriefing and reporting

All County Council Staff will report to their usual supervisors and debriefs will be arranged in the aftermath of the incident.

Section 8

Agency Specific Elements and Sub-Plans

All Agency Specific and Sub Plans will be attached in the appendix D of this plan.

Section 9

Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

9.1 Regional Level Co-ordination

A local response to a major emergency may be scaled up to a regional level where the nature of an emergency requires.

The chair of the local co-ordination group may declare a regional level emergency and activate the plan for regional level co-ordination. The plan for regional level co-ordination involves the provision of mutual aid, support and co-ordination facilities and the activation of a regional co-ordination group.

9.1.1 Regional Co-ordination Group

1. The primary function of the Regional Co-ordination Group is to maintain co-ordination of the principal response agencies involved from the extended “response region”. The lead agency which has declared the regional level emergency will convene and chair the Regional Co-ordination Group.
2. The regional co-ordination centre will become a key information management node, with links to each local co-ordination centre and onward to the lead Government Department and/or National Emergency Co-ordination Centre as appropriate.
3. The methods of operation of the regional co-ordination centre are similar to those for a Local Co-Ordination Centre.
4. A guide to Regional Level Response is attached to this plan in Appendix D7

Section 10

Links with National Emergency Plans

10.1 National Emergency Plans:

In the event that a National Emergency Plan is activated the Local Major Emergency Plan may be activated to support it. There are a number of potential emergencies which if they occur are most likely to be on a national scale – including;

- Nuclear accidents,
- Infectious disease outbreaks (e.g. smallpox, influenza pandemic) or
- Outbreaks of animal disease (e.g. foot and mouth, avian flu).

In contrast with major emergencies, the characteristics of these emergencies may include being non-site specific and occurring over an extended time period. In these situations the relevant national emergency plan will be activated by the Lead Government Department or the appropriate national body.

10.1.1 National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a local radiological emergency or the activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological/ Nuclear Emergencies and may be found on mem.ie, protocol documents section.

10.1.2 National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan

Offaly County Council will provide any assistance requested by the lead Government Department upon activation of the National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan.

10.1.3 Animal Health Plan

Offaly County Council will provide any assistance requested by the lead Government Department upon activation of the National Public Health Plan.

10.1.4 Activated on request from Irish Coast Guard

The National Emergency Plan may be activated by the Irish Coast Guard through the Department of the Marine in response to specific risks to which the Irish Coast Guard respond.

10.1.5 Activated on request from a Minister of Government

The National Emergency Plan may be activated on request from a Minister of Government in response to specific risks

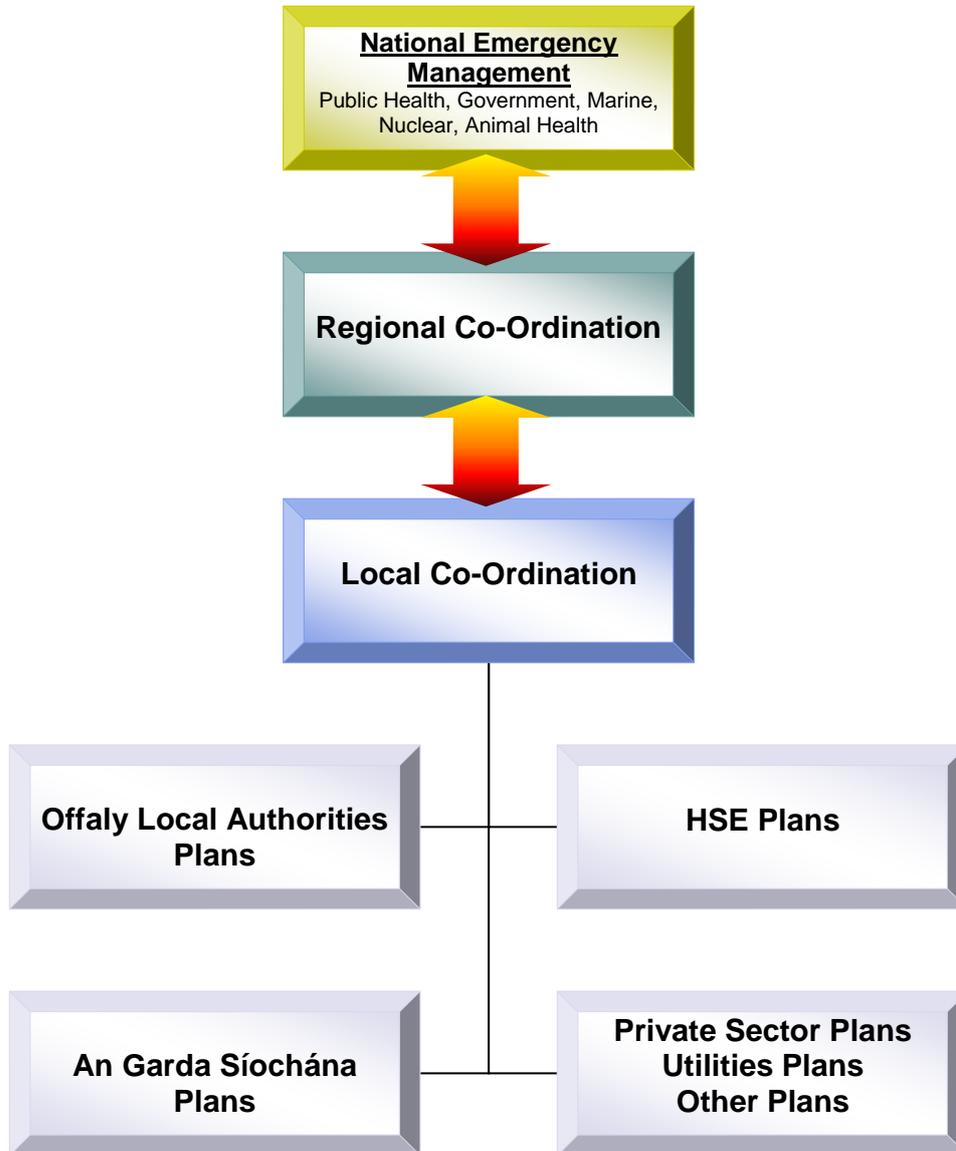


Figure 10.1: Linking Major Emergency Plans with National and other Plans

Section 11

Severe Weather Plans

11.1 Severe weather plans

Offaly County Council has a plan for responding to severe weather emergencies, whether a major emergency is declared or not. The Local and/or Regional Co-ordination Centres for Major Emergency Management may be activated to manage the response to a severe weather event, whether a major emergency is declared or not. *Please see appendix D5 for Offaly Plan for severe weather events.*

11.2 Severe Weather Conditions (Excluding Flooding Emergencies)

Severe weather emergencies may involve significant threats to infrastructure and vulnerable sections of the community. In the event of a major emergency involving severe weather, Offaly County Council will by default be designated as the lead agency. There is currently an arrangement that has been put in place by Met Éireann to issue public service severe weather warnings to the Local Authorities.

The target time for the issuing of a warning is 24 hours before the start of the event, but a warning may be issued up to 48 hours in advance when confidence is high. On Fridays and on the last 'normal' working day before a holiday period it may be appropriate to issue a preliminary warning or weather watch to Local Authorities.

Section 12

Site and Event Specific Arrangements and Plans

12.1 Site and Event Specific Plans

Sites and Events identified in the Risk Assessment that may require Emergency Plans include

- 12.1.1. O'Connor Park
- 12.1.2. Tullamore Agricultural Show

12.2 Seveso sites

12.2.1 Seveso Sites

At present there are two site within the functional area of Offaly County Council that are designated Lower tier Seveso Site under the European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006. The Emergency Plans for these sites are held by Offaly Fire & Rescue Service.

Section 13

The Recovery Phase

13.1 Support for Individuals and Communities

13.1.1 Support for individuals and communities

The recovery phase is the process of restoring and rebuilding the community in the aftermath of an emergency. This process requires a co-ordinated approach from all of the agencies involved.

In general, it is the function of the Local Co-ordination Group to provide strategic level management for the immediate, medium and long term consequences of an incident. Consequently, at the point when the issues on the agendas of the Co-ordination Groups are largely recovery focused, it may be appropriate for the Local Co-ordination Group to appoint a Recovery Working Group to plan ahead.

The specific requirements for the Local Authority in the recovery phase are as follows;

- clean-up
- Rebuilding the Community and infrastructure
- Supporting the recovery of affected communities
- Responding to community welfare needs (e.g. housing, water)
- Restoration of services

The Local Authority will develop and strengthen community awareness to possible emergencies and implement specific functions as outlined within the Framework Document for an effective and coordinated recovery process.

The recovery stage may require the mobilisation of both the resources of the Agency and a large range of voluntary Emergency Services, Utilities and private sector to assist the Local Authority as outlined in section 4 of the Plan.

13.1.2 Managing public appeals and external aid

The Local Co-ordination Group and supporting Crisis Management Team will establish public appeals and external aid as required; ideally this should be co-ordinated on a national level.

13.2 Clean-Up

One of the main considerations of the recovery stage is to implement the Local Authority's arrangements in place for Clean up, removal of debris and decontamination of the area/s affected by the incident.

13.2.1 Specify arrangements for clean up of sites / removal of debris / decontamination of sites of emergency and the Council's role in this.

The Local Authority shall undertake the following functions arising from in response to a major emergency with respect to clean up of the area/s affected by the incident;

- Arrange and oversee the clean-up of the affected area/s
- Engage any specialist contractors required to assist with recovery operations
- Arrange for the site clearance, demolition, clear up operations, removal and disposal of debris

13.3 Restoration of Infrastructure and the Council's role in this.

The Crisis Management Team will monitor the recovery Phase while ensuring that all Local Authority essential services (e.g. roads availability, fire and emergency operations cover, public water supply, waste water treatment, waste disposal) are maintained during the major emergency.

13.3.1 Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the situation;

The Crisis Management Team will monitor the situation and mobilise senior staff to deal with the crisis as required until the issues arising in the response phase are appropriately dealt with.

13.3.2 Procedure for liaison with utilities;

The Crisis Management Team will establish contact with all relevant utilities with regards to restoration/maintenance/or enhancing services provided to the site or to persons affected by the emergency

13.3.3 How the order of priorities are to be determined;

The Local Co-ordination Group and The Crisis Management Team will ensure that the Critical services are prioritised i.e. hospitals, water supply, food, communications, etc.
Furthermore, the Crisis management Team will ensure that all appropriate business continuity plans are implemented and key actions established.

13.3.4

Protection measures against continuing hazards.

The Local Co-ordination Group and Crisis Management Team will ensure that Adequate Resources are deployed and managed to prevent further escalation of the emergency while restoring Normality to the site or persons affected and will continue to function until the issues arising in the response phase are more appropriately dealt with by the Local Authority's normal management processes

Section 14

Review of the Major Emergency Plan

14.1 internal review process

This plan is to be reviewed and amended as necessary within Offaly County Council on an annual basis.

It is proposed that contact details are to be reviewed annually and updated accordingly. The Document Control Guidelines are to be followed when updating this plan.

14.2 How the Major Emergency Plan is to be reviewed and amended externally.

The plan is to be reviewed externally in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochána, at the Regional Major Emergency Steering & Working Group levels as well as the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. This review is to be conducted as directed by the Department of Environment's guidelines.

14.2.1 Inter agency Review at the Regional Major Emergency Steering Group

After every declaration of a major emergency and activation of the plan the following aspects are to be reviewed and reported upon:

- The performance of Offaly County Council in carrying out its functions. This is to be an internal review and report.
- The Co-ordination function. This review and report is to be external and in conjunction with the other principal response agencies.

A composite report, based on appropriate input from each principal response agency's internal report and the report on co-ordination, on every declared major emergency should be compiled by the principal response agency which was the initial lead agency for submission within a reasonable timescale to the relevant Regional Steering Group and the National Steering Group.

Section 15

Appendices

15.0 Appendices