National Operational Guidance

Major incidents

The link to the consultation survey is

https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MajorincidentsPR2022/

Baseline for pre-review research 2022

Contents

Introduction

This National Operational Guidance highlights key actions for fire and rescue service responders in the event of a major incident. It is 'context' guidance; it addresses the hazards that relate specifically to the scale of major incidents rather than the activity that needs to take place. Guidance dealing with the hazards of the activity of major incidents such as flooding, CBRN(e) events or a large scale fire are covered elsewhere within the National Operational Guidance framework.

Fire and rescue services and other emergency responders do not use terms such as disaster or crisis to describe a large scale emergency. They respond to incidents, or major incidents, and this guidance set out the additional activities or responsibilities that may be required to manage a major incident. It is important that the individuals who could be first on scene for their respective responder agency are able to declare a major incident according to service and local arrangements, and that they understand the benefits of doing so early.

The definition of a major incident is "an event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency". They are likely to be larger, more complex, endanger more people or threaten larger areas, and will require additional levels of command, control and co-ordination. This will be likely to involve many emergency services and other responding agencies in a long and high impact event. This fire and rescue service context guidance should therefore be read in conjunction with National Operational Guidance: Incident command and the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles.

Legislation

The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) places a duty on fire and rescue services as Category 1 responders to prepare for and respond to major incidents. The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework aligns the fire and rescue service to the same duties within the CCA, although it is not designated as a Category 1 responder.

The act divides local responders into two categories depending on the extent of their involvement in civil protection work and places a proportionate set of duties on each.

Category 1 responders are those organisations at the core of emergency response. They are subject to the full set of civil protection duties and are required to:

- Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
- Put emergency plans in place
- Put business continuity management arrangements in place
- Put arrangements in place to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authorities only)

Category 2 organisations are co-operating bodies that, while less likely to be involved in the heart of planning work, will be heavily involved in incidents that affect their sector.

The voluntary sector is not a category 1 or 2 responder but may support a major incident. There are emergency responder guides for the public sector across the governments and devolved administrations (e.g. Emergency Preparedness Chapter 14 The Role of the Voluntary Sector and Ready Scotland – Voluntary Response guide). They explain their role and what fire and rescue services should do to include them in their emergency response.

Devolution

The Act applies to the whole of the UK and reflects the various devolution settlements.

Part 1 – Local arrangements for civil protection

Part 1 of the Act applies to Scotland, with the powers it sets out residing with Scottish Ministers if they relate to devolved matters. While civil protection in Scotland is largely a devolved matter and therefore the responsibility of the Scottish Executive, certain responders in Scotland operate in reserved areas, with Regulations and guidance issued by UK Ministers. More information can be found here.

In Wales, UK ministers will make legislation and issue guidance in relation to responders in Wales. However, the Act requires UK ministers to obtain the consent of the Welsh Government before taking action in relation to a responder in Wales which falls within devolved competence.

In Northern Ireland, the fire and rescue service is not designated as a Category 1 responder and so Part 1 does not apply to Northern Ireland in the same way as it applies in the rest of the UK. It does apply to certain bodies in Northern Ireland who exercise non-devolved functions (e.g. the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Police Service of Northern Ireland). In addition, the Northern Ireland Administration has developed the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework, which ensures that responders falling within transferred competence act in line with the duties set out in the Act.

Part 2 – Emergency powers

Emergency powers are a reserved matter. They focus on the use of special legislative measures that might be necessary to deal with the effects of the most serious emergencies. However, Part 2 ensures the governments and devolved administrations will be consulted wherever possible if emergency powers are to be used in their territory. It allows emergency powers to be used in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland alone for the first time, though the use of emergency powers remains with Westminster.

Concordats setting out in more detail how these arrangements will work in practice have been agreed with Welsh and Scottish ministers. The signed concordats can be viewed on the governments and devolved administrations' websites as well as on the UK Resilience site, Resilience Direct.

Concordat between the UK government and the Scottish ministers

Concordat between the UK government and the Welsh ministers

The Act is supported by two sets of guidance:

- Emergency Preparedness: statutory guidance dealing with the pre-emergency planning phase
- Emergency Response and Recovery: non-statutory guidance describing the multi-agency framework for responding to, and recovering from, emergencies in the UK

Table 1 Legislation matrix

Legislation/arrangements	England	Northern Ireland	Wales	Scotland
Civil Contingencies Act 2004	Yes	Yes (for PSNI and MCA) The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework 2011 applies to the fire and rescue service	Yes	Yes Schedule 1 Specifically Part 2 - Category 1 Responders: Scotland and Part 4 - Category 1 and 2 Responders: Scotland
Emergency preparedness guidance	Yes	Yes (specifically Chapter 12)	Yes (specifically Chapter 11)	Yes (specifically Chapter 10)
Emergency response and recovery Guidance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Preparing Scotland Guidance	No	No	No	Yes
National co-ordination and Advisory Framework	Yes	Yes	Yes	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and The Chief Fire Officers Association Memorandum of understanding
Government arrangements	Resilience and Emergencies Division	Northern Ireland Central Crisis Management Arrangements	Welsh Government Liaison Team	Scottish Government Resilience Response

The Human rights Act (1988)

There are a number of articles within this Act that are relevant to fire and rescue services.

Article 2 of the Convention is particularly relevant to a fire and rescue service's planning and response to a major incident. It stipulates everyone's right to life shall be protected by law. European human rights case law has confirmed that if a local authority fails to take reasonable measures that would have prevented or mitigated the consequences of a foreseeable 'natural' disaster and deaths ensue as a result of that disaster, then this amounts to a violation of the right to life protected by Article 2. This emphasises the importance of interoperability and contingency planning both between fire and rescue services and other Category 1 and 2 responders.

Police service commanders are very likely to refer to the Human Rights Act in planning or responding to an incident. The most likely articles they will consider are: Article Two – The right to life, Article Six – the right to a fair trial and Article Eight – the right to a private and family life.

Risk management plan

Each fire and rescue authority or service has to decide their strategic direction via their risk management plan and adoptive powers under each country's relevant legislation to plan for and respond to incidents within their areas and in other areas as reflected in their risk management plans. The National Planning Assumptions should be considered by local emergency planning groups to take into account foreseeable incidents that will fall into the term 'major incidents' and plan accordingly. Fire and rescue services will also need to consider these planning assumptions as part of their risk management plan. See National Operational Guidance: Operations – Failure to identify foreseeable risk.

Responsibility of fire and rescue services

Fire and rescue services are responsible, under legislation and regulations, for developing policies and procedures and to provide information, instruction, training and supervision to their personnel about foreseeable hazards and the control measures used to reduce the risks arising from those hazards.

This guidance sets out to provide fire and rescue services with sufficient knowledge about the potential hazards their personnel could encounter when attending incidents. Fire and rescue services should ensure their policies, procedures and training cover all of the hazards and control measures contained within this guidance.

Relevant knowledge

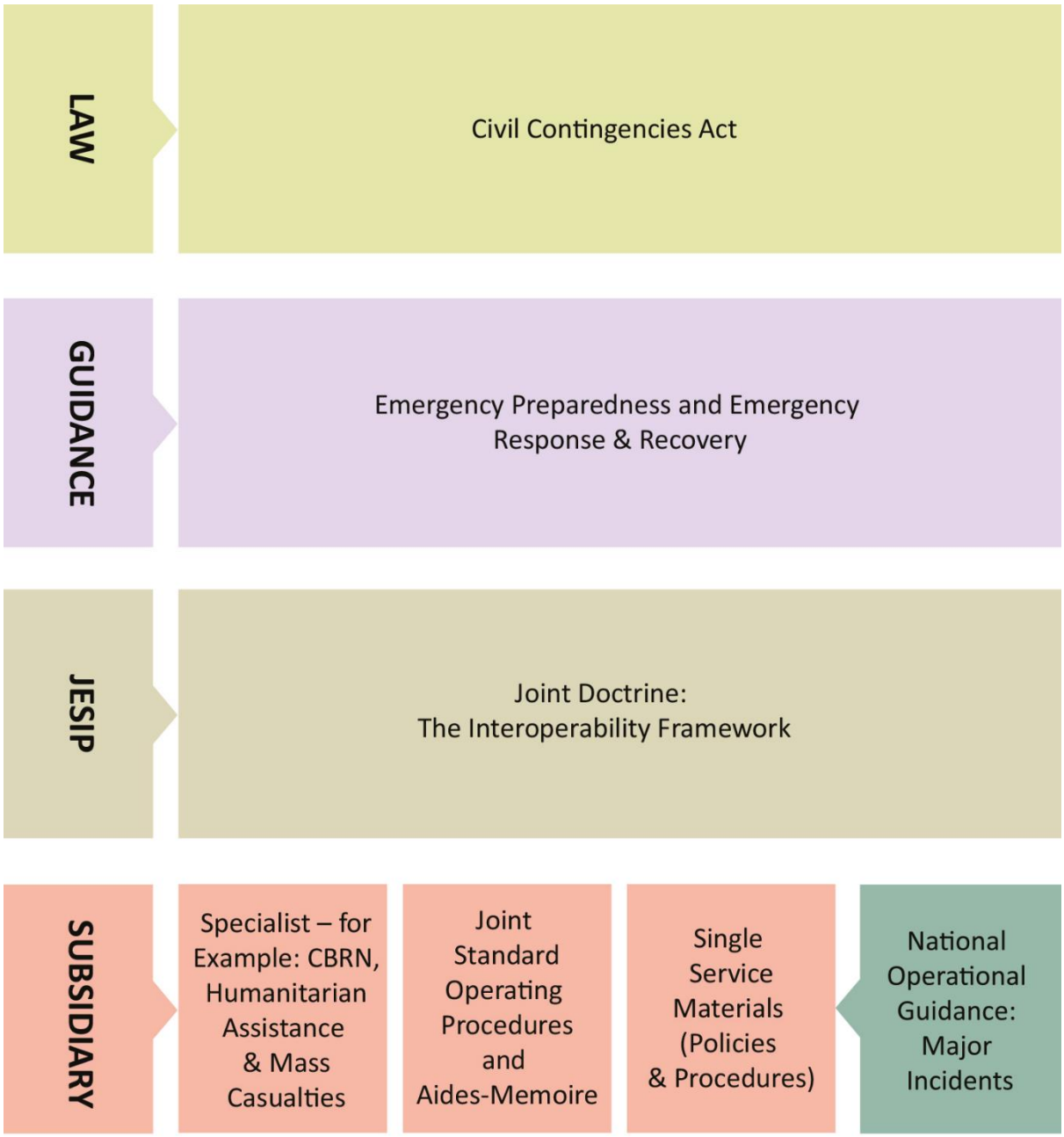


Image 1: Relevant doctrine

JESIP Joint Doctrine – the interoperability framework

As well as improving joint working between fire and rescue services and other emergency services, this guidance emphasises the need for all responding organisations to work in a joint and coordinated approach. See JESIP Vision - "Working Together – Saving Lives"

Five key principles of joint working

The Joint Doctrine sets out five principles to be applied by responders when they are determining an appropriate course of action in responding to and co-ordinating an emergency. These principles are not hierarchical and can be applied in any order throughout the incident.

Figure 2 - Principles for joint working

Image 2: JESIP Principles

The five principles are equally relevant from a major incident perspective and relate to operations at the scene as well as at remote locations. In terms of strategic actions relating to an incident, the strategic co-ordinating group (SCG) or equivalent is likely to be the means by which the principles are applied at a strategic level.

Co-locate – at a strategic coordination centre (SCC) as part of a strategic coordinating group (SCG)

Communicate clearly – with multiple agencies working at the SCC, and representatives from each attending the SCGs it is vital to use plain English and avoid jargon, acronyms or technical language that is not commonly understood

Coordinate across the agencies – one of the first requirements of an SCG will be to agree priorities and objectives using JESIP

Jointly understand risk – at the SCG this is likely to be risk to the wider community, to infrastructure, to the local economy or other significant but strategic risks, rather than just those present at the scene of operations

Shared situational awareness at the SCC using the M/ETHANE message from the scene, the Joint Decision Model and locally agreed multi-agency plans and processes

Hazard - Civil emergencies

HAZARD KNOWLEDGE

Local responders work within a common framework based on the structure provided by their government or devolved administration through the relevant legislation (see Table 1: Legislation matrix). They make their own decisions in the light of local circumstances and priorities about what planning arrangements are appropriate in their areas.

Civil protection arrangements need to be integrated both within and between Category 1 and 2 responders or reciprocal arrangements for Northern Ireland. They should also be conducted according to a practical doctrine beginning with anticipation and assessment of risk to enable effective response and recovery arrangements.

Although the military and voluntary organisations are not classified as category 1 or 2 responders under the CCA, they may have an important role to play in responding to a major incident. As part of the work of the local emergency planning groups, they should be invited to take part in planning, training, awareness, testing and exercising wherever possible. This will ensure that voluntary organisations are aware of and work within the relevant command structures maintaining assertive, safe and effective operations.

Control measure - Civil protection duties

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

The Cabinet Office has produced guidance (see Table 1: Legislation matrix) for applicable sections for governments and devolved administrations. This non-statutory guidance is targeted at all personnel who may become involved in emergencies. It aims to develop a shared understanding of multi-agency response and recovery arrangements across responding agencies.

While civil protection duties are set out in the legislation, the detail of what those duties mean, and how they should be performed, is delivered through the Regulations. The act and regulations are supported by the Emergency Preparedness guidance, which includes guidance to which the organisations covered by the Act must have regard.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Ensure that their arrangements comply with the requirement of the Act. The main civil protection duties for fire and rescue authorities as Category 1 responders (or reciprocal arrangements for Northern Ireland) are as follows:
    - Risk assessment
    - Business continuity management (BCM)
    - Emergency planning
    - Maintaining public awareness and arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public
    - Co-operation
    - Information sharing

- Ensure that the organisation is resilient, or has resilience arrangements in place, to be able to manage the ongoing major incident, as well as maintain business continuity in the rest of the organisation for the duration of the incident or until special arrangements are no longer required

TACTICAL ACTIONS

- There are no tactical actions associated with this control measure.

Hazard - Overwhelmed/overloaded communications systems

HAZARD KNOWLEDGE

For generic guidance on communication systems either within fire control rooms or at an incident ground. See National Operational Guidance: Operations – Failure to handle emergency calls and mobilise resources in a timely manner and National Operational Guidance: Incident command – Communication strategy.

Overwhelmed communications systems in fire control rooms

Due to the effects of a major incident, the fire and rescue service fire control room could experience disruption to the telephone links from the local telephone exchange, resulting in a loss of 999 calls. This could be as a result of either spike or spate conditions.

Overloaded emergency services radio communications system

A digital radio network is used by all three emergency services as well other non-blue light organisations. It provides a range of features including interoperable voice communications and wide area communications. However, the digital network does have capacity limitations as the capacity on local base sites is built for business as usual plus a 20 per cent headroom. This means that during a major incident, where a much larger than normal amount of resources may attend, the carrier network could become congested or exceeded if not managed correctly. This could result in users being denied access. Fire and rescue services should make arrangements to avoid such congestion at an incident ground.

Control measure - Manage congestion of digital network communications on the incident ground

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

During major incidents, the ability to communicate intraoperably and interoperably is essential and because of the nature of major incidents the channels used to communicate can become many and complex. All of the three emergency services have trained operational communications advisers who are able to assist in managing the digital network communications. In most cases this is done by providing incident commanders with advice and, if necessary, producing a communications plan which takes into account the needs of the incident as well as the capacity of the local digital network base site for radio and mobile communications. The network monitoring centre (NMC) can also assist in managing capacity and will provide appropriate advice and information throughout the duration of a major incident.

To reduce the potential impact of loss or congestion of the digital radio network during multi agency incidents, incident commanders and control rooms should consider an early request for a multi-agency talk group via police control.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Have 24/7 access to an operational communications adviser
- Ensure operational staff and fire control staff are fully aware of the limitations of the secure digital network and correct training is in place

- Have procedures and arrangements to inform the NMC and to mobilise an operational communications adviser when a major incident is declared

TACTICAL ACTIONS

All personnel should:

- Follow standard communication protocols and keep radio and mobile communication to a minimum

At the scene of an incident, tactical incident commanders should:

- Obtain advice from an operational communications adviser to avoid radio and mobile communications becoming congested at an incident

Hazard - Ineffective multi-agency working

HAZARD KNOWLEDGE

Previous major incidents have identified the ineffectiveness of single agency working which has led to a number of public inquires and national learning. As a result, the Joint Doctrine: The Interoperability Framework (Edition 2) has been produced to provide a framework for multi-agency working.

Whenever they work together – and especially at major incidents – joint agencies need to ensure that they have the most coherent and effective joint response possible.

Declaring that a major incident is in progress as soon as possible means that pre-determined arrangements can be established early, as it can take time for effective operational structures, resources and protocols to be put in place. Declaration of a major incident triggers a strategic and tactical response from each affected emergency service and other responder agencies.

Information on the police response for major incidents can be found in the Authorised Professional Practice for Civil emergencies. The National Ambulance Resilience Unit's (NARU) Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Group (EPRRG) are the ambulance's emergency preparedness lead for England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

In the early stages of a major incident, one service may be in attendance first and responders may carry out tasks that are not normally their agency's responsibility. It is essential that appropriate command and control arrangements between agencies, in line with joint situational awareness, are established as soon as practicable.

UK Operations: Defence contribution to Resilience and Security (third edition) incorporates UK government policy on military aid to the civil authorities (MACA). There are two notable points contained within it that modify how Defence contributes military support for resilience and security:

- Defence is not seen as the 'last resort' option; rather, it must be ready and configured to play an early role in providing civil resilience
- In an effort to simplify the process and expedite requests for support, terminology for how and where Defence can support the civil authorities is rationalised under a single term: military aid to the civil authorities (MACA)

Defence has a key role to play supporting lead government departments, devolved administrations and civil authorities as they prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptive challenges and major national events. This joint doctrine publication provides both a military and non-military audience with the necessary guidance and practical understanding on how Defence can contribute military support in dealing with natural hazards, major incidents or malicious attacks against the UK and Crown Dependencies. Note: Whilst the UK armed forces use the terms tactical and operational to describe command levels, their hierarchy is the reverse with a military operational commander being senior to a tactical commander. For further information on command hierarchy see The Foundation for Incident Command – Levels of command.

Control measure - Multi- agency co-location

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

When commanders are co-located, they can perform the functions of command, control and coordination face to face. This allows the establishment of jointly agreed objectives and a coordinated plan.

The benefits of co-location apply equally at all levels of command.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Embed JESIP Principles within policy, procedure, training, awareness and exercising for all levels of response staff

TACTICAL ACTIONS

At the strategic co-ordinating group, commanders should:

- Liaise with tactical incident commanders as soon as possible and confirm the established Forward Command Post (FCP)

Control measure - Multi-agency communication

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

Meaningful and effective communication between responders and responder agencies underpins effective joint working.

See Control measure – Multi-agency

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Embed JESIP Principles within policy, procedure, training and exercising for all levels of response staff

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Strategic and tactical incident commanders should:

- Exchange reliable and accurate information about hazards, risks and threats
- Communicate clearly using plain English
- Ensure information shared is free from acronyms and other potential sources of confusion
- Use multi-agency briefings to gain an understanding of the capabilities of other responding agencies
- Ensure information shared is understood and agreed by all involved in the response

Control measure - Multi-agency co-ordination

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

Co-ordination underpins joint working by avoiding potential conflicts, preventing duplication of effort and minimising risk. It involves commanders discussing resources and the activities of each responder agency, agreeing who should be the lead agency at any given time and who should chair co-ordinating groups, agreeing priorities and making joint decisions throughout the incident.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Embed JESIP Principles within policy, procedure, training and exercising for all levels of response staff

TACTICAL ACTIONS

At the strategic co-ordinating group, commanders should:

- Where agreed, chair/attend co-ordinating meetings and make sure they take place regularly

Control measure – Joint understanding of risk

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

Each responding agency may see, understand and treat risks differently. By jointly understanding risks and associated mitigating actions, organisations can promote the safety of responders and reduce the impact that risks may have on members of the public, infrastructure and the environment.

See The Foundation for Incident Command – Safety Management

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Embed JESIP Principles within policy, procedure, training, awareness and exercising for all
- levels of response staff
- Ensure staff are trained in operational risk assessment and understand the fire and rescue
- service Firefighter safety maxim

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Tactical incident commanders should:

- Complete an appropriate risk assessment and share the outcomes with other responding agencies

Strategic and tactical incident commanders should:

- Where appropriate, contribute to developing a shared risk assessment with other responding agencies

Control measure – Share situational awareness: Major incidents

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

Shared situational awareness is a common understanding of the circumstances, immediate consequences and the longer-term implications of the emergency, along with an appreciation of the available capabilities and priorities of the emergency services and responding agencies.

Shared situational awareness is not always easy to achieve and all the inherent uncertainties and obstacles that limit individual situational awareness are operating in the background. Interaction of individuals, a team or multiple teams also increases the level of difficulty. Some common barriers to achieving effective shared situational awareness are:

- Concepts not commonly understood
- Terminology not commonly understood
- Unawareness of the use of differing metrics and measurements being used by different teams
- Graphical representations (e.g. signs and symbols) not commonly understood
- Natural team assumptions made about other teams going unchallenged or unacknowledged
- Operating procedures and objectives of one team not understood by others
- Information not shared amongst teams
- Expertise held by one team not made available to the collective effort
- Challenge and critique suppressed by dominance of one person/team (group think)

It is important to emphasise that shared situational awareness does not imply that everything that is known by involved parties should be shared. This would be grossly inefficient and not everybody needs to know everything.

Information management during major incidents is extremely challenging and can be problematic. It is then further complicated by the collective nature of multi-agency working and the sharing of information across internal and external boundaries. It should be recognised that it is at these boundaries that friction, miscommunication, misunderstanding, frustration and breakdowns can occur.

Different organisations and professions use terminology differently in this field. For example, the term ‘evidence’ has a very specific meaning in a policing context but has a more general meaning across much of the rest of the public sector. Similarly, the term ‘intelligence’ in a military and policing context refers to information that has been through an agreed process of analysis and has subsequently been graded to a standard agreed by all as to its validity and authenticity. Clarifying what is meant by specific terms when working across boundaries is essential.

To enhance the effectiveness, interoperability and situational awareness of those involved in managing major incidents, the common methodology of creating a common operating picture (COP), should be adopted. A COP that is appropriate to the operating context is a powerful point of reference for the attainment of shared situational awareness.

A COP is a product, an output or a structured display of information where shared situational awareness can be achieved across multi-agency partners to provide and agree a common end to a joint response. This kind of shared knowledge and insight is built not just by the provision of information but also interacting through asking questions, clarifying uncertainties and challenging assumptions.

During major incidents it should be recognised that the actual form of a COP will vary between organisations and contexts. Some will be graphical or map-based, others more textual. Some will be interactive, others static. Some will emphasise real time data and others will include only validated data, thereby imposing a time lag on inclusion. What, and how much, is shared depends upon the common objectives which an SCG/TCG are working towards and the level of interaction and interdependence between them in doing so.

Achieving shared situational awareness is essential for effective interoperability. Further information can be found in National Operational Guidance: Incident command – Situational awareness.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Develop procedures, training, awareness initiatives and exercising for all levels of response staff to enhance situational awareness

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Strategic and tactical incident commanders should:

- Develop shared situational awareness with other responding agencies and control rooms using the common operating picture methodology
- Communicate outcomes of the common operating picture to the relevant internal and external agencies using the M/ETHANE message structure
- Use concepts that are commonly understood by all agencies
- Use terminology that is commonly understood by all agencies
- Confirm the use of commonly understood metrics and measurements used by different teams
- Ensure graphical representations (e.g. signs and symbols) are commonly understood
- Challenge and/or acknowledge natural team assumptions both internally and externally to clarify understanding
- Confirm operating procedures and objectives to ensure they are understood by all teams
- Engender information sharing amongst teams
- Encourage the sharing of relevant expertise of all available teams

Hazard - Ineffective strategic response arrangements to support major incidents

HAZARD KNOWLEDGE

Major incidents are likely to be complex, protracted, and involve many different agencies in their resolution. The scale of such incidents, the impact on large numbers of people over a wide area and the potential demand this will put on local resources mean that additional levels of response arrangements will be required. Without a higher degree of co-ordination, communication and command and control ensuring effective joint working at every level of the incident, the risk to the public, responders and to the successful resolution of the incident will be increased.

Strategic co-ordination arrangements are designed to support and compliment tactical and operational command, not replace them. Strategic co-ordinating groups should always operate at an appropriate level and degree of detail to be effective.

Control measure – Local emergency planning group arrangements

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) and Framework (or devolved equivalent) places requirements on responding agencies to make arrangements for the strategic co-ordination of major incidents and places emergency planning at the heart of the civil protection duty on Category 1 responders. The Act requires Category 1 responders to maintain plans for preventing emergencies, reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of emergencies and taking other action in the event of emergencies. They should draw on risk assessments and have regard to the arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public at the time of an emergency.

See Control Measure - Warn, inform, instruct and update people: Major incidents

Local plans should determine whether an emergency has occurred and make provision for training and exercising of key staff. Category 1 responders should involve Category 2 responders. They are also specifically required to have regard to the activities of relevant voluntary organisations not subject to the Act's requirements to ensure developed plans are effective. Procedures should also be put in place to ensure that the plan is reviewed periodically and kept up-to-date.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services must:

- Develop a procedure for determining whether an emergency has occurred
- Make provision for training key staff; and provision for exercising the plan to ensure it is effective
- Participate in their local emergency planning group

Fire and rescue services should:

- Ensure that the plan is reviewed periodically and kept up-to-date
- Train all relevant personnel in the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) and Framework (or devolved equivalent)
- Train all relevant personnel in the role of co-ordinating groups

- Embed the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) in their ways of working
- Train all relevant personnel on the current National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) arrangements and the range of local and national resilience assets and other specialist assets that can be deployed as a national capability
- As part of the emergency planning group, ensure an adequate programme of multi-agency training, exercising and planning
- Ensure that an appropriate level of planning for foreseeable major risks is in place

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Strategic commanders should::

- Access appropriate local plans during a major incident to influence decision making
- Work with tactical incident commanders and other members at the co-ordinating group to develop a common operating picture (COP) and joint understanding of risk based on related local emergency planning assumptions

Tactical incident commanders should:

- Access the appropriate level and type of support from strategic commanders at major incidents
- Share situational awareness with tactical and strategic commanders to inform a common operating picture (COP)

Control measure - Strategic co-ordinating groups

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

At a major incident the co-ordination of multi-agency resources will be the most effective way of resolving the situation. All emergency planning groups are required to have arrangements for the strategic coordinating groups. These groups are established at a pre-agreed strategic coordination centre (SCC) and comprised of strategic leaders from all the response and recovery agencies that are or may become involved. In this guidance we refer to these as co-ordinating groups. Such a group, operating under the auspices of the Civil Contingencies Act and Framework (or devolved equivalent) and with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles at the centre of their thinking and actions will ensure the best possible response to and recovery from the incident, enhancing public and responder safety and improving the outcomes. A co-ordinating group will usually be chaired and managed by the police strategic commander but may be led by other agencies as appropriate depending on the nature of the incident. This group will also co-ordinate any requests for national assets, including military assistance. They will also ensure that both the response and recovery phases of the incident are given equal importance and the transition is managed effectively.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Identify, train, exercise and equip personnel to operate in a strategic co-ordinating environment, in line with National Operational Guidance: Incident command

- Ensure that strategic commanders are familiar with co-ordinating group establishment and ways of working, and that they can support the establishment and continuation of a coordinating group for as long as is necessary
- Ensure that strategic commanders who are sent to a co-ordinating group have an appropriate level of authority to make decisions on behalf of their organisation

TACTICAL ACTIONS

At the strategic co-ordinating group, commanders should:

- Delegate appropriate actions to tactical incident commanders to deliver the groups' objectives

Tactical incident commanders should:

- Carry out delegated actions to deliver co-ordinating groups' objectives

Control measure – Tactical co-ordinating groups

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

At a major incident, a co-ordinating group at the tactical level should be established to ensure tactical commanders or managers communicate and co-ordinate effectively with each other and with strategic and operational functions.

Tactical coordinating groups can be convened at the scene of an incident or a remote location (e.g. a police building); this will depend on the type of incident and speed of escalation. They will include appropriately qualified commanders of each agency committed within the area of operations who have relevant decision making powers and will undertake tactical co-ordination of the response.

Although each of the most senior officers at the tactical level will have specific service or agency responsibilities, they should together deliver tactical multi-agency management of the incident. They should ensure that operational commanders have the means, direction and co-ordination required to deliver successful outcomes. Unless there is an obvious and urgent need for intervention, they should not become directly involved in the detailed operational tasks being discharged at the operational level.

The chair of the group must create time for regular briefing, consultation and tasking meetings with counterparts and key liaison officers. To support the chair and other members in these functions, responders may consider the creation of a support group to assist with administration.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Identify, train, exercise and equip personnel to operate in a tactical co-ordinating environment in line with National Operational Guidance: Incident command
- Ensure that tactical commanders both remote and on-scene are familiar with coordinating group establishment and ways of working, and that they can support the establishment and continuation of a co-ordinating group for as long as is necessary
- Ensure that tactical commanders who are sent to a coordinating group have an appropriate level of authority to make decisions on behalf of their organisation

TACTICAL ACTIONS

At the tactical coordinating group, tactical commanders should:

- Assess significant risks and use this to inform tasking of operational commanders
- Plan and co-ordinate how and when tasks will be undertaken
- Obtain additional resources if required
- Establish effective communications with both on-scene commanders and any strategic coordinating group

Incident commanders should:

- Determine priorities for allocating available resources

Control measure - Additional resources: Major incidents

This control measure should be read in conjunction with Additional resources

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

Protracted or widespread major incidents will involve large numbers of fire and rescue service personnel, vehicles and equipment over prolonged periods of time. This requires significant resilience and logistical arrangements to be managed successfully. This scale of operations is likely to be outside of that normally experienced by crews at an incident, including fire control room(s) and normal incident support arrangements that are in place for day to day activities. Operational support for ongoing major incidents requires an additional level of support to manage the incident successfully. This will require scalable support arrangements and systems, including command support as well as sufficient numbers of trained personnel to sustain extended periods of operation. See National Operational Guidance: Incident command.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Ensure that they have scalable command support arrangements for all incidents, however large or protracted
- Consider the provision of a major incident room or support cell to provide additional support to fire control, and strategic, tactical and operational commanders
- Ensure that sufficient resources are available and considered within risk management plans and that planning assumptions and exercising includes preparation for major incidents

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Tactical incident commanders should:

- Ensure that they are aware of the type and level of support that an ongoing major incident will receive and how the structural arrangements work
- Plan ahead at the incident to predict and request resource requirements as far in advance as practicable

532 - Establish clear lines of communication with all the relevant parties that are in place to assist them

Hazard - Major resource requirements

HAZARD KNOWLEDGE

Most emergencies in the UK are dealt with at a local level by emergency services, local authorities and local resilience partners. In some instances, the scale or complexity of an emergency is such that it places significant demands on local fire and rescue services and may require the direct involvement by central government. Such incidents may occur over a protracted period of time and require extensive use of:

- Resources
- Logistical support
- Specialist advice and guidance

Large or complex incidents which may require a higher level of engagement and central government involvement have been defined within three broad types (or levels). Further information can be found in Responding to Emergencies – The UK Central Government Response – Concept of Operations. Other responding agencies have similar national co-ordination roles.

Control measure - National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) and mutual aid arrangements

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

The National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) co-ordinates fire and rescue service National Resilience assets. Home Office (HO) National Resilience and Fire Directorate (NRFD) and the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) work with other government departments, partner organisations and devolved administrations during no notice and rising tide major incidents to provide policy advice, ministerial briefings, co-ordination across government and management of communications. NCAF enables decision makers, both locally and nationally, to receive clear and unambiguous advice on how best to co-ordinate the fire and rescue service response to relevant emergencies.

Further information can be found in The National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) England and the Supporting Guidance to NCAF.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Integrate NCAF fully into response strategies and arrangements
- Train and exercise for responding to major and complex incidents incorporating NCAF arrangements

TACTICAL ACTIONS

At the strategic co-ordinating group, commanders should:

- Seek appropriate advice from tactical advisers to establish resource requirements
- Implement the NCAF arrangements

- Identify and agree the establishment of multi and single agency strategic holding areas using specific functional officers

Control measure - National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) and National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC)

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

The NCAF electronic support system overseen by NRAT and National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC) based in Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service maintains a 24/7 overview of the availability and deployment of National Resilience assets. Before and during an incident, the NRFC and NRAT monitors, manages and co-ordinates the mobilisation of national resilience assets in conjunction with NRAT, the CFRA National Resilience Duty Officer, and supporting fire and rescue authorities using the Electronic Supporting System (ESS). It will also co-ordinate the deployment of the National Strategic Advisory Team (NSAT) who provide advice and support to co-ordinating groups, where required.

Further information can be found in Responding to Emergencies – The UK Central Government Response – Concept of Operations.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Implement standard procedures for reporting to the NRFC
- Provide the NRFC with daily electronic updates on the availability of National Resilience assets using the NCAF Electronic Support System (NCAF ESS)
- Establish and maintain communications with NRFC at all times

TACTICAL ACTIONS

At the strategic co-ordinating group, commanders should:

- Liaise with the NRAT duty officer
- Establish contact where necessary with NSAT

Control measure - Government liaison

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

In England the Home Office (HO) Fire Duty Officer and the Resilience and Emergencies Division provide the key arrangements for government liaison.

In some circumstances the scale or complexity of an emergency will be such that some degree of central government support or co-ordination becomes necessary. On these occasions, the Home Office will co-ordinate the government response policy arrangements for emergencies involving fire and rescue services.

The policy arrangements will be delivered by the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) Operations Support Team for no notice major incidents during the initial 48 hours. The HO National Resilience and Fire Directorate (NRFD) Operational Support Team will deliver the response to

emergencies policy arrangements for rising tide incidents and for no notice incidents after the first 48 hours.

In both circumstances, the Home Office Fire Duty Officer is the first point of contact in government for a range of responsibilities that are within the scope of NCAF. They maintain close communications with the NRFC, the Chair of the NFCC, NSATs, NRAT and other relevant government departments. The HO Fire Duty Officer monitors developing or emerging issues and incidents, and provides the necessary advice and support.

The Home Office Fire Duty Officer is a critical link to the OSCT and NRFD operations centres which enable strategic decision makers at a national and local level to carry out their role in an informed manner. These centres comprise of government department policy officials and government liaison teams. In consultation with the chair of the NFCC and/or the NSAT, they will provide situational awareness to The Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) and across central government departments. In addition, they co-ordinate advice for ministers and engage with government liaison officers (GLOs) via the Resilience and Emergencies Division (RED) who provide strategic coordinating groups (SCGs) with a single point of contact for central government assistance.

Liaison officers will be deployed across the UK to strategic co-ordinating groups to provide a link between local responders and the government. The Government Liaison Team (GLT) and Government Liaison Officer (GLO) A framework for engagement explains how the government will deploy liaison officers providing the link between local responders and central government departments and agencies responsible for resilience issues. They will support the local and national emergency management arrangements during and after an emergency and beforehand if the nature of the incident allows. In devolved areas, this role is fulfilled by liaison teams from the devolved administrations who link into COBR via their respective governments.

The decision to deploy liaison officers will be taken following discussion between the relevant government or devolved administration and the lead government department. Each government or administration has its own response arrangements and protocols for government liaison.

Government liaison officers (GLO) will attend any convened co-ordinating group to provide a point of contact for government and assist the exchange of information. They will contribute to the national appreciation of the situation and identify whether there are likely to be issues arising or capability gaps emerging which may require devolved or central government support or input. They enable joint working with partners to identify priorities and provide advice to COBR, lead government departments or devolved administrations to support national discussions on the deployment of scarce resources across the affected area.

In addition to the GLO, the chair of the NFCC and/or the NSAT will also provide situational awareness to COBR and across central government departments. They provide the Home Secretary and other ministers in COBR with advice in accordance with central government's requirements. Similar advisory roles are fulfilled by senior fire and rescue service officers in the devolved administrations. Further explanation of this requirement is set out in the National coordination and advisory framework for the fire service.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Have procedures to ensure appropriate reporting and communications arrangements with relevant government departments

- Establish and maintain a relationship with the government resilience division

TACTICAL ACTIONS

At strategic coordinating groups, commanders should liaise with government liaison officers to:

- Share relevant and timely information with central government
- Establish priorities and provide advice to COBR when required
- Request deployment of additional resources where appropriate

Control measure - Identifying the need for enhanced logistics support

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

The primary function of the enhanced logistics support (ELS) capability is to enhance the fire and rescue service command and control capability, by allowing effective and scalable deployment of National Resilience resources to any national level incident.

The capability has personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage the organisational and control aspects at the nominated strategic holding area (SHA) or multi-agency strategic holding area (MASHA) for the incident.

The ELS capability will be requested by a National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) officer, based on the needs of the incident and the National Resilience capabilities (NR) attending the incident.

The success and effectiveness of the ELS capability is dependent on the suitability of the SHA or MASHA; these should be established as detailed in the Guide to the Identification, Inspection and Establishment of Multi-Agency Strategic Holding Areas. Further information can be found on the website, Multi-agency strategic holding areas: a guide.

SHAs and MASHAs are identified by individual fire and rescue services, in conjunction with statutory resilience forums. The SHA and MASHA addresses and mapping co-ordinates are held on the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) electronic support system. This information is used by the National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC) when mobilising National Resilience assets.

The equipment provided by the ELS resources includes:

- Systems for communications and IT
- Computer systems and printing facilities
- Lighting
- Electrical systems and support systems
- Warning systems
- Identification signs

ELS can provide an enhanced briefing facility (EBF) for use within the MASHA or SHA. This is a tent structure that includes:

- Rest facilities for firefighters, including tables and chairs
- Lighting and heating (heating provided in conjunction with Mass Decontamination Units)

- Briefing facilities, including display and projection equipment

The ELS functions include:

- Operations support
  - Safety briefing of personnel
  - Inter-service liaison
  - Resource co-ordination
  - Liaison with the incident commander
  - Marshalling within the MASHA or SHA
- Logistics support
  - Co-ordination and provision of sufficient resources to the MASHA or SHA
  - Personnel welfare and consumables
- Planning support and information management
  - Proposing and reviewing information
  - Planning resource and relief plans
  - Planning meetings, briefings and debriefings
- Communications support
  - Communication and recording of actions and decisions
  - Maintenance of relevant logs within the MASHA or SHA using online asset management software

The affected fire and rescue service should mobilise a liaison officer to the SHA or MASHA to assist with welfare and communication issues.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Have systems in place to request ELS resources from National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC)
- Identify appropriate locations for the National Resilience enhanced logistical support equipment to be located

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Incident commanders should:

- Mobilise a strategic holding area liaison officer to assist with welfare and communication issues

Control measure - National Resilience: Provide enhanced logistics support

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

The enhanced logistics support officer (ELSO) role is carried out by a National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) officer. Their responsibilities include managing enhanced logistics support (ELS) activities and logistics activities including:

- Managing the strategic holding area (SHA) or multi-agency strategic holding area (MASHA) in liaison with the affected fire and rescue service
- Managing ELS briefings and updates
- Providing liaison between:
    - The SHA or MASHA
    - Affected fire and rescue service
    - Home Office Operations Centre
    - National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC)
- Facilitating requests for support from the incident commander using the agreed communications channels
- Liaising with other NRAT officers
- Managing the logistical needs of the SHA or MASHA
- Liaising with and providing logistical support as required to the affected fire and rescue service, including welfare issues and liaison with local authority partners
- Establishing appropriate communication links with key stakeholders

The enhanced logistics support role is to support the ELSO by:

- Co-ordinating the mobilised resources into, within, and out of the SHA or MASHA; mobilisation requests should be directed through the affected fire and rescue service fire control room or via the communication channel agreed with the incident commander
- Facilitating logistical support for incidents including:
    - Urban search and rescue (USAR)
    - Mass decontamination (MD)
    - Flood response
    - High volume pumps (HVP)
    - Hazardous materials, including CBRN(e)
    - Marauding terrorist attack (MTA) personnel
- Co-ordinating crew reliefs and facilitate affected fire and rescue service welfare arrangements under the request and direction of the affected fire and service's incident commander
- Conducting briefings, safety briefings and debriefings in the SHA or MASHA under the request and direction of and the request of the affected fire and service's incident commander
- Facilitating the maintenance, repair and replacement of National Resilience equipment and vehicles, in order to maintain the required level of resources for the duration of the incident
- Facilitating the structured return of personnel and equipment to their fire and rescue service under the request and direction of and the request of the affected fire and service's incident commander

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

National Resilience should:

- Prepare, communicate and distribute awareness material describing the benefits of ELS to the wider fire and rescue service, as well as to other agencies and interested parties

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Specialist responders should:

- Fulfil the roles of the enhanced logistics support officer (ELSO) and the enhanced logistics support personnel

Hazard - Public awareness

HAZARD KNOWLEDGE

During major incidents it is important to deliver accurate, clear and timely information and advice to the public to:

- Reassure those who may or may not be affected
- Provide public safety information
- Avoid mass panic
- Reduce the burden of requests for information
- Preserve the reputation of the organisation

Good public communication is vital to the successful handling of any emergency and will ensure public confidence is increased and ensure they feel well informed.

Co-ordination of information flow among stakeholders is a key issue during any emergency and will improve the consistency of the information provided by the different agencies involved. In the confusion that often follows a major incident, it can be a difficult and lengthy process to establish clear, concise and accurate facts and figures about what has happened. However, the media will constantly request this information and may seek to obtain it from any official or unofficial source they can.

Providing an inconsistent message to the media and the public may demonstrate the lack of joint working and shared situational awareness across emergency responders. Great care should be taken to avoid this as inconsistency may also lead to a loss of confidence in the responding agencies handling the incident.

Good public communication may include production and distribution of a core media brief for distribution among key stakeholders, central co-ordination of interviews, or even a centralised press office. It could also mean providing additional press officers by one agency to support the efforts of another agency that may be coming under particular pressure.

Control measure - Warn, inform, instruct and update people: Major incidents

This control measure should be read in conjunction with Warn, inform and advise people

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

For generic guidance on warning and informing the public that are directly affected by an incident see National Operational Guidance: Operations – Warn, inform and advise people.

Electronic media is generally the fastest way to broadcast a message and it is a useful way to get out very detailed information, in particular for those at work or who have no immediate access to television or radio during the day. It will need to be regularly updated during an incident or emergency. In addition, fire and rescue services' own websites and social media can also be used to stream press conferences. The information is constantly available and it serves as an audit log to show that information was provided at certain times.

The release of sensitive information (such as the number and details of those involved) must be strictly controlled and should follow the established multi-agency process between the relevant organisations such as the police, disaster victim identification (DVI) and the coroner.

The UK Resilience section on the Cabinet Office website and other sites can be a central source of information for the media inside and outside the United Kingdom, including press releases, briefings, statistics, response figures, maps, graphics and instructions. It can also be used to distribute emergency plans and transmit alerts and warnings.

The scale and nature of any emergency will dictate the level of national involvement in its handling, particularly in communications. If ministerial involvement becomes necessary, then the News Co-ordination Centre (NCC) will be set up by staff in the Cabinet Office. The NCC will function alongside the government department leading the response and liaise closely with staff from the Central Office of Information News and Public Relations at the scene of the emergency, if outside London.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Have established protocols with other category 1 and 2 responders to:
    - Agree the process to be used to identify the lead responder to warn, inform and advise the public on any other type of emergency
    - Agree the identity of lead responders to warn, inform and advise the public on those scenarios which can reasonably be anticipated
    - Agree joint working procedures and allocation of responsibilities in support of the lead responder for warning, informing and advising
    - Agree the trigger points for the handover of the lead responsibility for warning, informing and advising from one responder body to another and the procedures to achieve this
    - Agree how services or products for warning, informing and advising (e.g. equipment for media centres) will be sourced
- As appropriate, agree with local companies and organisations the circumstances in which their facilities or resources (e.g. premises, call centres), may be made available to the responder bodies, to help deliver advice and information to the public

TACTICAL ACTIONS

At the strategic co-ordinating group, commanders should:

- Agree protocols for sharing information and brief relevant personnel

Control measure - Media Liaison Officer (MLO)

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

Attendance of an experienced media liaison officer (MLO), at the scene should help to ease pressure from the media. It is vital that this person is able to quickly establish a procedure for working with media requests and for regularly briefing them on developments. Rumour and conjecture will flourish in a vacuum, and it is far better that the MLO gains the trust and confidence of the media by providing regular updates on events, even if there is little new to say.

Demonstrating awareness of the media's need to meet deadlines or broadcasting live reports will assist the MLO in establishing credibility with the media at the scene. This is important as they may need to

seek the media's co-operation in, for example, organising pooled access to the incident site for filming or broadcasting urgent appeals for blood donors or details of evacuation arrangements.

It may be appropriate to nominate senior officers from responding agencies who are outside the main command structure to act as the primary lead for media interviews. This will remove some pressure from the incident commander and ensure the consistency of the message.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Have arrangements for an experienced media liaison officer (MLO) to be able to attend incidents
- Have trained staff available to co-ordinate media interaction

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Tactical incident commanders should:

- Liaise with media liaison officers (MLO) and strategic commanders on co-ordinating ongoing media interaction

Hazard - Multiple casualties

HAZARD KNOWLEDGE

This hazard should be read in conjunction with National Operational Guidance - Multiple casualties

Control measure - Plan reception centres

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

Depending on the scale and nature of the incident, suitable locations and logistics for the safe reception of large numbers of people may need to be identified and arranged. Reception centres in the form of survivor reception centres, emergency rest centres and humanitarian assistance centres are designed to cater for the needs of all casualties and others involved.

Experience has shown that in the immediate aftermath of an incident many people will travel to the scene or to meeting points, such as travel terminals, if they believe their family or friends may have been involved in an emergency. Friends and relatives who may be feeling intense anxiety, shock or grief, need a sympathetic and understanding approach. Appropriate and effective liaison and control must be in place to ensure that information is accurate, consistent and non-contradictory.

Local authorities work with statutory and specialist agencies and the voluntary sector who can provide additional specialist assistance at a large scale incident or one which requires additional logistical and public support. Such agencies include:

- Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum
- Red Cross — emergency response
- Disaster Action
- Salvation Army Trust
- Samaritans
- St. John Ambulance / St. Andrews Ambulance (Scotland)
- Royal Voluntary Service — formerly Women's Royal Voluntary Service

For further information, see: Emergency Response and Recovery Non statutory guidance accompanying the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Make appropriate arrangements with local authorities and partner agencies for pre-planned public reception centres as part of the community risk assessment
- Develop local guidance and appropriate arrangements on the available support services for people affected by emergency incidents
- Ensure that incident commanders have an understanding of the processes and arrangements for local emergency public support services

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Incident commanders should:

- Carry out timely liaison with partner agencies on the establishment of reception centres Instigate local arrangements for emergency public support services

Control measure - Carry out triage

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

The core principle of triage is to do the most for the most. The initial triage method in a multiple casualty situation is the triage sieve. Triage sieves can be applied to either adults or children.

At the point when it has been identified that multiple casualties will require treatment, the fire control room should be notified so that the required resources can be mobilised. It may be appropriate to declare a major incident using the JESIP M/ETHANE model.

The triage sieve will identify immediately life-threatening problems based on the C < A B C > system, and correctly prioritise casualties for treatment. Not doing this will potentially risk lives.

Fire and rescue services should be prepared to employ triage sieves if there are multiple casualties or at a major incident.

As a principle, at a poorly resourced incident, minimal casualty care is provided if there are multiple casualties. The following actions can be achieved without breaching the core principle of triage:

- Quickly turn a casualty to protect their airway
- Encourage self-help
- Encourage a bystander to apply direct pressure

The Ambulance Clinical Practice Guidelines (JRCALC) acknowledge that now ambulance services are all practising C < A B C > in their initial patient assessment, the standard triage sieve needs to take account of the importance of initial assessment and treatment of catastrophic haemorrhage.

The diagram below is the National Ambulance Resilience Unit (NARU) Triage Sieve, which was published for use by all ambulance staff at a major incident.

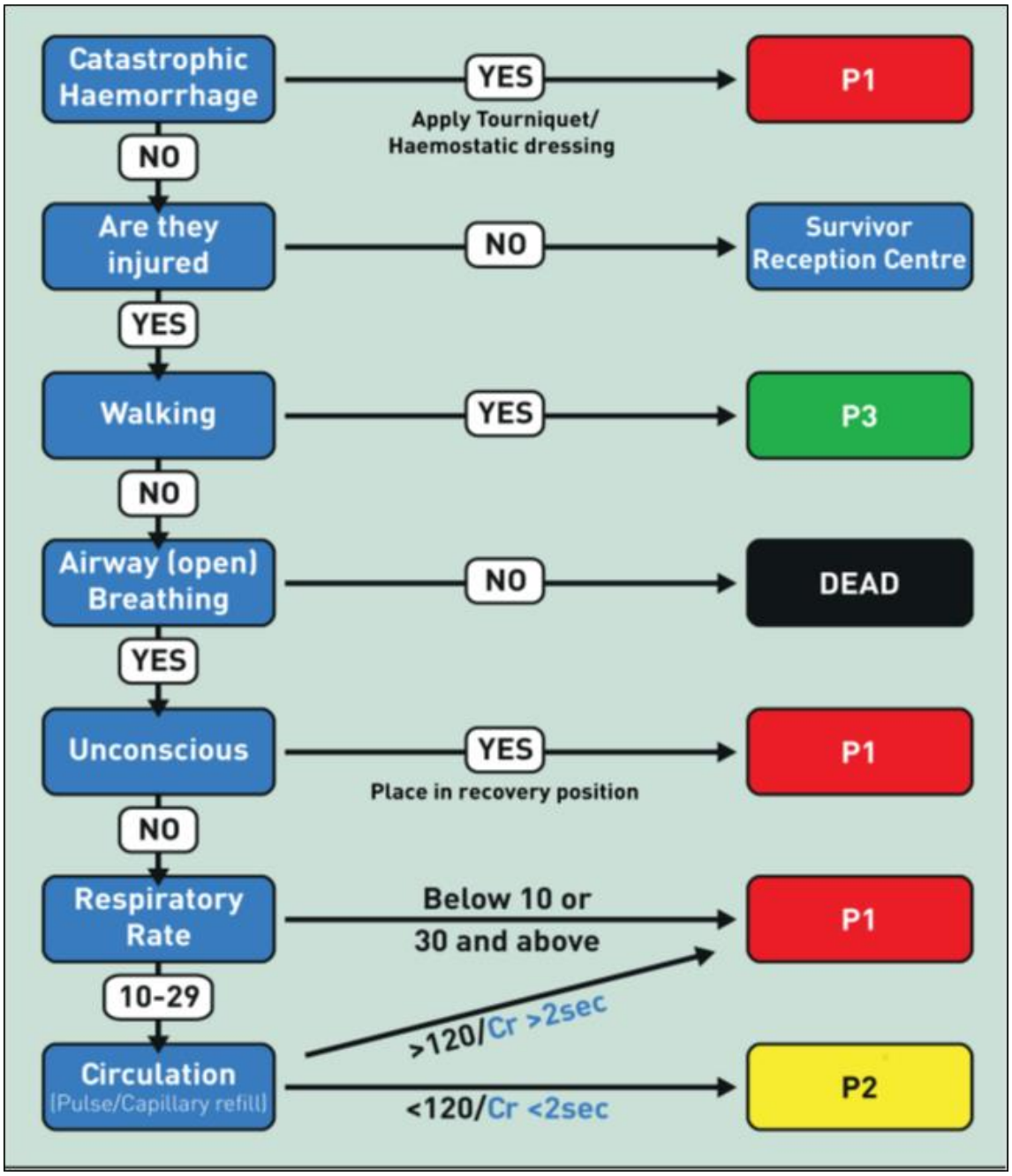
The priorities are described as:

- P1 or red tags (immediate) are used to label those who cannot survive without immediate treatment but who have a chance of survival
- P2 or yellow tags (observation) are for those who require observation (and possible later re-triage). Their condition is stable for the moment and they are not in immediate danger of death. These casualties will still need hospital care and would be treated immediately under normal circumstances.
- P3 or green tags (wait) are reserved for the 'walking wounded' who will need medical care at some point, after more critical injuries have been treated.

The JESIP casualty triage has an additional priority:

- P4 or P1E (expectant) is used for those whose injuries are so extensive that they will not be able to survive given the care or resource that is available. This is only to be used under authorisation

of the Medical Incident Officer. They alone have the responsibility to match these casualties' injuries with the number and type of the other casualties and the remaining resources available to the hospitals.



Triage Sieve Source: National Ambulance Service Medical Directors Group (NASMeD)

The same triage principles apply to children. Paediatric triage tape is available, which groups children by length, weight and age and provides normal physiological values for respiratory rate and pulse in each of the groups to carry out the triage process.

Having labelled the casualty with their priority, casualties are handed over to medical responders. A record or log of the numbers of each priority should be kept and the fire control room notified.

When referring to casualties and the above priorities at the scene of an incident, everyone should be sensitive to those who could overhear the information; this could include relatives, members of the public or the media.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Provide relevant personnel with details of how to carry out a triage sieve for adults or children

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Incident commanders should:

- Identify the number of casualties requiring medical attention and notify the fire control room
- Consider declaring a major incident for multiple casualties
- Carry out or assist with triage of casualties
- Record the outcome of the triage and discreetly communicate this information to medical responders and the fire control room

Control measure - Mass casualty and fatality plans

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

Dealing with a mass casualty incident requires the planning, co-operation and response of numerous partner agencies. These incidents have the potential to rapidly overwhelm services and careful pre-planning and a co-ordinated response has been shown to provide the best outcome for casualties.

Mass casualty plans are designed as an effective response to major incidents where conventional sudden impact events, or an emergency which results in mass casualties occur simultaneously in multiple locations. Plans are normally activated by the ambulance service of where the incident occurs. Conventional incidents are defined as those that cause traumatic injuries (involving burns, fractures, bleeding etc.) and/or fatalities and do not contain any CBRN (e) elements. See National Operational Guidance: Hazardous Materials – Exposure of the public to hazardous materials.

The number of casualties which determines the term ‘mass’, will depend on the geographical makeup of the area where the incident occurs and the number of casualties that local resources can normally deal with.

Because of the dynamics of a major incident, the activation of mass casualty plans will need to be based on the nature and severity of the trauma suffered, the ratio of ambulance and medical resources available and the accessibility and appropriateness of clinical expertise and resources available within the critical timeframe to reduce mortality from injury. It is therefore difficult to map options against fixed casualty thresholds; the options implemented will vary from one scenario to the next but should be based on pre-agreed emergency preparedness arrangements which outline agreed multi agency actions and responsibilities in responding to mass casualty incidents.

The level of fire and rescue services participation in the implementation of any mass casualty plan will need to be agreed based on the nature and hazards present at an incident and any specialist resources that may be required. See control measures Multi-agency communication and Multi-agency co-ordination

Once a mass casualty incident has been declared it may be necessary for all relevant response organisations to activate their own major incident plans (if they have not already done so). They should then establish a strategic coordinating group to identify the requirements necessary to maintain or

increase, if necessary, the capability of the essential emergency services to sustain safe levels of service.

The casualty management plan must be discussed with partner agencies, ensuring that all on-scene commanders are aware of the contents. The plan should include:

- Tactical options to be conducted (treat and leave or treat and extricate)
- Composition of the teams delivering casualty care
- Initial locations for casualty collection points (CCP) and casualty clearing stations (CCS)
- The casualty management plan must be included as part of the joint decision making process and briefings, prior to staff being deployed into the warm zone, ensuring that all staff are aware of the tactics and procedures to be followed

See Control Measure - Hazardous Materials Risk Assessment.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Identify fire and rescue service roles, resources and assets required to support any mass casualty or mass fatality plans
- Ensure that staff are suitably trained in the tactical options used as part of a casualty or fatality management plan

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Tactical incident commanders should:

- Jointly agree a casualty management plan, taking account of the tactical options available
- Communicate hazards identified in the inner cordon or hazard zone
- Support other on-scene commanders with the nomination of casualty collection point (CCP) and casualty clearing station (CCS) locations
- Communicate the casualty management plan to other personnel

All personnel should:

- Carry out the tactical options included in the jointly-agreed casualty management plan

Control measure - Use casualty transport equipment

CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE

Under the ‘LAST’ acronym, Transport is the final element to facilitate the casualty receiving appropriate and definitive medical care. It should provide the removal of casualties to a place of relative safety. It is important to remember that the casualty should be protected from any harm during this part of the operation.

Information that may be relevant and important for casualties to be safely and effectively transported, should be passed to the medical responders as part of the casualty handover. For further information refer to Handover of a casualty to a medical responder.

Rescues may need to be carried out using fire and rescue service equipment for extricating or transporting the casualty. The use of suitable equipment such as basket stretchers, scoop stretchers or equivalent should be considered.

Any equipment used should aim to reduce manual handling issues for personnel, while also reducing the risk of deterioration of the casualty's condition. Making a request for suitable resources or equipment from other agencies should be considered.

Stretchers

When using stretchers, the following points should be addressed:

- The stretcher and associated equipment must be fit for its intended use
- The stretcher and associated equipment must always be used within a safe system of work
- Consideration of additional loading in the rescue environment due to the use of emergency responders as stretcher attendants
- The need for physical protection to prevent injury of the casualty
- Warm clothing or covering for the casualty to prevent hypothermia

Generally, unconscious casualties and those with major or spinal injuries should be transported by stretcher in a horizontal position; movement in a vertical position should only be used temporarily in order to negotiate obstacles.

Motorised vehicles

It may be beneficial to consider the use of suitable motorised vehicles to assist personnel to extricate and transport the casualty. Requests for suitable resources or vehicles from other agencies should be considered.

The benefits of using motorised vehicles to transport casualties include:

- Improved access and egress to the scene of operations
- Reduced impact on the ongoing operations of other fire and rescue services or other agencies
- To prevent deterioration of the casualty
- Reduction in manual handling issues

There may be restrictions, such as insurance arrangements, on fire and rescue service vehicles being used to transport casualties to a place of relative safety, including hospitals. Fire and rescue services should have a corporate policy that clearly states whether this practice is allowed or prohibited. If it is allowed, the policy should include clear guidelines about when it would be an appropriate and justified action.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Fire and rescue services should:

- Ensure that relevant personnel are aware of the casualty transport equipment available, and how to request it
- Ensure that relevant personnel are aware of the motorised casualty transport available, and how to request it

- Have a corporate policy that clearly states whether fire and rescue service vehicles can or cannot be used to transport casualties

TACTICAL ACTIONS

Incident commanders should:

- Consider using appropriate fire and rescue service equipment to extricate or transport the casualty
- Consider requesting appropriate equipment from other agencies to extricate or transport the casualty
- Consider using appropriate motorised vehicles to transport the casualty
- Consider requesting appropriate motorised vehicles from other agencies to transport the casualty
- Follow service policy regarding the transportation of casualties in fire and rescue service vehicles