

Guidance

Emergency response and recovery

Guidance for staff of responder agencies, particularly senior officers or managers involved in emergency response and recovery preparations.

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Overview

The [Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>) guidance aims to establish good practice based on lessons identified from responding to and recovering from emergencies, both in the UK and internationally.

‘Emergency response and recovery’ is designed to complement [Emergency preparedness](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness>), which sets out how the duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) — 2004 and its supporting regulations should be implemented.

The guidance aims to further develop:

- shared understanding of the multi-agency framework for emergency response and recovery at the local level, and the roles and responsibilities of individual organisations
- shared understanding of the role of local, sub-national and national levels in emergency response, and how they will work together
- a common frame of reference, especially concepts and language, for those involved in responding to emergencies

The guidance was updated in April 2010 and refreshed in July 2012 following the coroner’s report on the 2005 London bombings. The changes made to this document reflect the learning, since version 1, published in November 2005. There is a [consultation report \(PDF, 214KB\)](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100814113337/http://cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/231587/err-consultation-report.pdf) (<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100814113337/http://cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/231587/err-consultation-report.pdf>) which summarises the response to the March/April 2009 emergency response and recovery consultation and outlines our response.

The sections below are an introduction to the guidance. They detail the areas that each chapter covers, with links to the guidance document itself.

Who the guidance is for

While ‘Emergency preparedness’ is aimed principally at civil protection professionals, ‘Emergency response and recovery’ is likely to be useful to all staff of responder agencies, in particular senior officers or managers who may become involved in emergency response and recovery work. It is intended to be a stand-alone briefing document that can be used for training purposes in advance of emergencies and for reference purposes during emergencies.

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This guidance is primarily aimed at an English and Welsh audience, and while it does describe emergency response and recovery arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland, it does so for context-setting purposes only. This guidance is relevant to both England and Wales unless otherwise stated.

Principles of effective response and recovery

Emergency response and recovery arrangements should be flexible and tailored to reflect circumstances, but will follow a common set of underpinning principles. These principles guide the response and recovery effort at all levels — from local to national.

There are 8 guiding principles.

Anticipation

Ongoing risk identification and analysis is essential to the anticipation and management of the direct, indirect and interdependent consequences of emergencies.

Preparedness

All organisations and individuals that might have a role to play in emergency response and recovery should be properly prepared and be clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Subsidiarity

Decisions should be taken at the lowest appropriate level, with co-ordination at the highest necessary level. Local agencies are the building blocks of the response to and recovery from an emergency of any scale.

Direction

Clarity of purpose comes from a strategic aim and supporting objectives that are agreed, understood and sustained by all involved. This will enable the prioritisation and focus of the response and recovery effort.

Information

Information is critical to emergency response and recovery and the collation, assessment, verification and dissemination of information must be underpinned by appropriate information management systems. These systems need to support single and multi-agency decision making and the external provision of information that will allow members of the public to make informed decisions to ensure their

Integration

Effective co-ordination should be exercised between and within organisations and levels (ie local and national) in order to produce a coherent, integrated effort.

Co-operation

Flexibility and effectiveness depends on positive engagement and information sharing between all agencies and at all levels.

Continuity

Emergency response and recovery should be grounded in the existing functions of organisations and familiar ways of working, albeit on a larger scale, to a faster tempo and in more testing circumstances.

[Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>): chapter 2 — principles of effective response and recovery.

Useful documents

- [Central government's concept of operations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations>) — document setting out the arrangements for the response to emergencies requiring co-ordinated UK central government action
- [Expectations and indicators of good practice set for category 1 and 2 responders](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders>) (June 2009) — part 3 provides an operational check list for category 1 and 2 responders for each of these principles
- [Data protection and sharing](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-and-sharing-guidance-for-emergency-planners-and-responders) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-and-sharing-guidance-for-emergency-planners-and-responders>) — guidance for emergency planners and responders
- [Planning the coordination of spontaneous volunteers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-the-coordination-of-spontaneous-volunteers) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-the-coordination-of-spontaneous-volunteers>) — guidance for emergency responders to assist in the planning, coordination and management of spontaneous offers of support from the public during an emergency.

Terminology

[Civil protection lexicon](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-responder-interopability-lexicon) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-responder-interopability-lexicon>) — a lexicon of terminology for multi-agency, local strategic operations

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Responsible agencies: who responds to emergencies

Chapter 3 of the guidance outlines the roles and responsibilities of the main agencies and sectors that are likely to become engaged in the response to, and recovery from, emergencies at the local level. This chapter describes arrangements in both England and Wales unless otherwise stated. It includes information on:

- police services
- fire and rescue services
- health bodies
- HM Coroner
- local councils
- government agencies and other non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs)
- the Armed Forces
- the private sector
- the voluntary sector
- the community

[Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>): chapter 3 — agencies involved in responding to and recovering from emergencies.

Useful documents

- [Emergency preparedness](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness>) — chapters 2,3 and 14
- [Expectations and indicators of good practice set for category 1 and 2 responders](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders>) (June 2009)
- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) joint doctrine publication [Operations in the UK: the defence contribution to resilience](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operations-in-the-uk-the-defence-contribution-to-resilience) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operations-in-the-uk-the-defence-contribution-to-resilience>) — sets out the detailed rules and procedures governing the employment of the Armed Forces for MACA operations
- [The role of the insurance industry in dealing with civil emergencies](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-role-of-the-insurance-industry-in-dealing-with-civil-emergencies) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-role-of-the-insurance-industry-in-dealing-with-civil-emergencies>)

Key links

- [GOV.UK — preparing for emergencies](https://www.gov.uk/local-planning-emergency-major-incident) (<https://www.gov.uk/local-planning-emergency-major-incident>)
- [UK Police Service](https://www.police.uk/) (<https://www.police.uk/>)

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- [DCLG Fire and Rescue Service \(https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-fire-and-rescue-authorities-to-reduce-the-number-and-impact-of-fires\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-fire-and-rescue-authorities-to-reduce-the-number-and-impact-of-fires)
- [Chief Fire Officers Association \(CFOA\) website \(http://www.cfoa.org.uk/\)](http://www.cfoa.org.uk/)
- [NHS website \(http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/homepage.aspx\)](http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/homepage.aspx)
- [Ministry of Justice \(https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice)
- [DCLG: local government \(https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government)
- [Local Government Association \(LGA\) \(http://www.local.gov.uk/?pageId=1\)](http://www.local.gov.uk/?pageId=1) — The LGA promotes the interests of English and Welsh local authorities
- [Environment Agency \(https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency)
- [The Health and Safety Executive \(http://www.hse.gov.uk/\)](http://www.hse.gov.uk/)
- [Highways Agency \(http://www.highways.gov.uk/\)](http://www.highways.gov.uk/)
- [Maritime and Coastguard Agency \(MCA\) \(http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home\)](http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home)
- [Ministry of Defence \(MoD\) \(https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence)
- [Army website \(http://www.army.mod.uk/\)](http://www.army.mod.uk/)

You may also wish to refer to:

- [Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum \(https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/voluntary-sector-civil-protection-forum\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/voluntary-sector-civil-protection-forum)
- [Red Cross \(http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Emergency-response\)](http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Emergency-response) — emergency response
- [CRUSE Bereavement Care \(http://www.cruse.org.uk/\)](http://www.cruse.org.uk/)
- [Disaster Action \(http://www.disasteraction.org.uk/\)](http://www.disasteraction.org.uk/)
- [Neighbourhood Watch Association \(http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/\)](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/)
- [Royal National Lifeboat Institution \(http://rnli.org/Pages/Default.aspx\)](http://rnli.org/Pages/Default.aspx)
- [Salvation Army Trust \(http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/\)](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/)
- [Samaritans \(http://www.samaritans.org/\)](http://www.samaritans.org/)
- [St. John Ambulance \(http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/\)](http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/)
- [St. Andrews Ambulance \(Scotland\) \(http://www.firstaid.org.uk/\)](http://www.firstaid.org.uk/)
- [Royal Voluntary Service \(http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/\)](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/) — formerly Women's Royal Voluntary Service
- [Gas and electricity emergency contacts \(http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/get-advice/energy\)](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/get-advice/energy)
- [OfGem \(https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/\)](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/) — contains details of domestic & business gas and electricity suppliers
- [Northern Ireland Electricity plc \(http://www.nie.co.uk/\)](http://www.nie.co.uk/)
- [Electricity Supply Board Ireland \(http://www.esb.ie/main/home/index.jsp\)](http://www.esb.ie/main/home/index.jsp)
- [Water UK \(http://www.water.org.uk/home/resources-and-links/links\)](http://www.water.org.uk/home/resources-and-links/links) — details of Water

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- [Air Accident Investigation Branch \(http://www.aaib.gov.uk/home/index.cfm\)](http://www.aaib.gov.uk/home/index.cfm)
- [Rail Accident Investigation Branch \(http://www.raib.gov.uk/home/index.cfm\)](http://www.raib.gov.uk/home/index.cfm)
- [Marine Accident Investigation Branch \(http://www.maib.gov.uk/home/index.cfm\)](http://www.maib.gov.uk/home/index.cfm)

Responding to emergencies: the national framework

There is an agreed national framework for managing the local multi-agency response to, and recovery from, emergencies. Chapter 4 of the guidance describes the single-agency and multi-agency management tiers that comprise the local framework; their roles and responsibilities; the interaction between the tiers; and the interaction between individual agencies within the tiers.

Command, control and co-ordination are important concepts in the multi-agency response to emergencies and this chapter distinguishes between single agency command and control structures (often termed gold, silver and bronze) and the multi-agency co-ordination structures that may be convened at strategic, tactical and, exceptionally, at operational levels.

It is a generic framework and the principles and procedures underpinning it are flexible enough to be used to manage a wide range of emergencies. However, further guidance is given on the considerations that may apply in relation to:

- localised emergencies
- wide-area emergencies
- terrorist incidents
- animal health outbreaks
- maritime emergencies
- procedures and considerations for the management of evacuations

The effective management of most emergencies will require access to specialist scientific and technical advice. During the response to an emergency, local responders in England are advised to consider establishing a Science and Technical Advice Cell (STAC) to provide timely and co-ordinated advice on scientific and technical issues.

In Wales, public health advice for strategic co-ordinating groups is provided by health advisory teams (HATs). The National Public Health Service for Wales takes the lead in the establishment of the HAT.

The government operates a scheme of emergency financial assistance (Bellwin) to assist local authorities in covering costs that occur as a result of work related to the response phase of emergencies.

De-briefing should be honest and open, and its results disseminated widely.

[Emergency response and recovery \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery): chapter

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Useful documents

- [Central government's concept of operations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations>) — document setting out the arrangements for the response to emergencies requiring co-ordinated UK central government action
- [Expectations and indicators of good practice set for category 1 and 2 responders](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders>) provides a detailed check-list for category 1 and 2 responders
- [Provision of scientific and technical advice in the strategic co-ordination centre](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-scientific-and-technical-advice-in-the-strategic-co-ordination-centre-guidance-to-local-responders) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-scientific-and-technical-advice-in-the-strategic-co-ordination-centre-guidance-to-local-responders>) — guidance to local responders
- [Evacuation and shelter guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evacuation-and-shelter-guidance) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evacuation-and-shelter-guidance>) — non-statutory guidance to complement 'Emergency preparedness' and 'Emergency response and recovery'
- [Mutual Aid](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-mutual-aid-a-short-guide) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-mutual-aid-a-short-guide>) — draft short guide for local councils
- [Identifying people who are vulnerable in a crisis](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/identifying-people-who-are-vulnerable-in-a-crisis-guidance-for-emergency-planners-and-responders) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/identifying-people-who-are-vulnerable-in-a-crisis-guidance-for-emergency-planners-and-responders>) — guidance for emergency planners and responders

Links

- [Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure](http://www.cpni.gov.uk/) (<http://www.cpni.gov.uk/>) — guidance for procuring resilient telecommunications systems
- [Bellwin scheme](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bellwin-scheme-2012-to-2013-guidance) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bellwin-scheme-2012-to-2013-guidance>)

Training

[The Emergency Planning College \(EPC\)](http://www.epcollege.com/) (<http://www.epcollege.com/>) is the leading provider of training for emergency preparedness, attracting delegates with responsibility for preventing, planning for, responding to or recovering from a major incident. The EPC runs courses on the care of people as well as other aspects of civil protection.

Useful documents

- [DCLG: guidance on development of a site clearance capability in England and Wales](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-development-of-a-site-clearance-capability-in-england-and-wales) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-development-of-a-site-clearance-capability-in-england-and-wales>) — guidance to help everyone with a key

generated by all types of incident whether of natural causes, accidental or from a terrorist attack

- the Home Office document [Guidance on dealing with fatalities in emergencies](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-dealing-with-fatalities-in-emergencies) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-dealing-with-fatalities-in-emergencies>) (May 2004)
- [The needs of faith communities in major emergencies: some guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61226/faith_communities.pdf) (PDF, 268KB) (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61226/faith_communities.pdf) — revised Home Office and Cabinet Office guidance document
- [Maritime and Coastguard Agency \(MCA\)](http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home) (<http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home>)

See also [National recovery guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-recovery-guidance) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-recovery-guidance>)

Recovering from emergencies: rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating

Recovery is a complex and long running process that will involve many more agencies and participants than the response phase.

Recovery is defined as the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency, but it is more than simply the replacement of what has been destroyed and the rehabilitation of those affected.

Local communities may also look upon an emergency as an opportunity to regenerate an area. Regeneration is about transformation and revitalisation.

The chapter of the guidance sets out:

- key principles of planning for and undertaking recovery
- the scope of recovery capability and activity
- a framework for recovery
- roles and responsibilities for various agencies and groups engaged in planning for and recovering from emergencies
- suggested structures for those involved in managing recovery
- processes for managing and co-ordinating the recovery phase
- the transition between the response and recovery phase
- the role and operation of the Recovery Coordinating Group
- guidance on recovery funding
- guidance on recovery reporting
- the evaluation and debrief process

[Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>): chapter 5 — recovering from emergencies

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See also [The national recovery guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-recovery-guidance\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-recovery-guidance).

Resilient telecommunications: minimising disruption to normal life

Good communications are at the heart of an effective response to and recovery from an emergency.

Resilient communications are able to absorb or mitigate the effects of disruptions to normal life. Circumstances or events that disrupt normal life include natural events such as flooding, or circumstances that have occurred through human intervention such as an electrical power failure or a terrorist incident.

There is no one simple solution to enhancing the resilience of communications. However, there are 5 guiding principles that, when appropriately applied, lead to enhanced resilience. These are:

- identify and prioritise communication activities
- look beyond the technical solutions
- ensure diversity of your technical solutions
- adopt layered fall-back arrangements
- plan to share and exchange information

Telecommunications sub-groups (TSGs) have been formed to act as a local focus for enhancing the resilience of responders' telecommunications arrangements. TSGs have been established in each local resilience forum (LRF) area as an integral part of the government's resilient telecommunications strategy.

The overall resilience of communications arrangements can be considerably enhanced through the use of schemes that are only available within the responder community. A summary of a selection of technical solutions are provided in this chapter. This covers:

- public fixed telecommunications
- public mobile telecommunications
- satellite communications
- airwave
- ResilienceDirect
- high integrity telecommunications system (HITS)

[Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery)

[\(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery): chapter 6 — resilient telecommunications

Further on [resilient communications \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/resilient-](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/resilient-)

Humanitarian assistance: meeting the needs of those affected

Humanitarian assistance is about ensuring that those involved and affected by emergencies are properly cared for.

This chapter identifies the key groups of people affected by emergencies, and outlines how their needs can be met. The key groups covered are:

- the injured
- uninjured survivors, and those without serious injuries
- families and friends
- family and friends of the deceased
- specific groups such as children, the elderly and faith groups
- rescue and response workers

It also gives specific guidance about meeting the long term of the injured, survivors, family and friends.

This chapter is primarily oriented towards emergencies occurring in the UK. However, in dealing with overseas emergencies involving UK citizens, agencies should draw on this guidance selectively and pragmatically.

Further information is also available in the form of [interim national strategic guidance for NHS organisations on psychosocial and mental health care for people following emergencies](#)

(http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/DH_103562). This work has been carried out by the Department of Health.

[Emergency response and recovery](#)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>): chapter 7 — meeting the needs of those affected by an emergency.

Useful documents

- [Humanitarian assistance in emergencies](#)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>)

Links

- [Red Cross](http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Emergency-response) (<http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Emergency-response>) — emergency response
- [Charity Commission](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/) (<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/>)

Working with the media

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This chapter concerns co-operation with the media at the scene of an emergency.

It includes information on:

- the role of the News Co-ordination Centre
- warning and informing the public
- the challenges of working with the media
- co-ordinating media liaison
- working effectively with the media in emergencies
- media arrangements at the scene of an emergency
- specific issues for consideration, including the release of casualty figures, interviews with survivors, remote access and VIP visits
- media debriefs

Media interest creates pressure 24 hours a day, so careful planning of staggered handovers between shifts is essential.

Case studies from recent emergencies are included in chapter 8, section 10 of the guidance.

[Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>): chapter 8 — working with the media.

Useful documents

- [Emergency preparedness](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness>): chapter 7 — communicating with the public
- The BBC's [Connecting in a crisis guide](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15250977) (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15250977>): an initiative designed to ensure that their own local radio station producers have established appropriate contacts with emergency planners, the police and other key organisations in their localities
- [Media Emergency Forum](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/media-emergency-forum-annual-reports) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/media-emergency-forum-annual-reports>): annual reports

Links

- [GOV.UK — preparing for emergencies](https://www.gov.uk/local-planning-emergency-major-incident) (<https://www.gov.uk/local-planning-emergency-major-incident>)
- [Government Communications Network \(GCN\)](https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/) (<https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/>)
- [National Steering Committee for Warning and Informing the Public \(NSCWIP\)](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130128101412/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/national-steering-committee-warning-informing-public-nscwip) (<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130128101412/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/national-steering-committee-warning-informing-public-nscwip>)
- [UK Press Card](http://ukpresscardauthority.co.uk/) (<http://ukpresscardauthority.co.uk/>)

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The [Emergency Planning College \(EPC\)](http://www.epcollege.com/) (<http://www.epcollege.com/>) is a training provider for emergency preparedness, attracting delegates with responsibility for preventing, planning for, responding to or recovering from a major incident. The EPC runs courses on the care of people as well as other aspects of civil protection.

You may also wish to refer to:

- [Number 10 latest news](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/prime-ministers-office-10-downing-street) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/prime-ministers-office-10-downing-street>)

Emergency response arrangements in England

The Department for Communities and Local Government, Resilience and Emergencies Division (DCLG-RED) act as a conduit for communications between central government and the local level. They are responsible for supporting local response and recovery efforts, and ensuring that there is an accurate picture of the situation in their area.

If CCA emergency powers are to be enacted a nominated co-ordinator will be required. They will co-ordinate activities under emergency regulations.

The arrangements outlined in this chapter of the guidance are in line with those in the revised [Central government arrangements for responding to an emergency: concept of operations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations>).

[Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>): chapter 9 — multi-LFR working arrangements (formerly regional arrangements)

Useful documents

- [Emergency preparedness](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness>): chapter 16 — collaboration and co-operation between local resilience forums in England
- [Central government's concept of operations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations>) — document setting out the arrangements for the response to emergencies requiring co-ordinated UK central government action

Links

- [DCLG civil resilience](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/working-with-local-partners-to-plan-for-and-respond-to-emergencies) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/working-with-local-partners-to-plan-for-and-respond-to-emergencies>) — detailing DCLG's civil resilience role in supporting local response and recovery efforts in England

For a list of lead government departments (LGDs) for UK emergencies, including devolved aspects, please see [List of LGDs' responsibilities \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-lead-government-departments-responsibilities-for-planning-response-and-recovery-from-emergencies\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-lead-government-departments-responsibilities-for-planning-response-and-recovery-from-emergencies).

Background

When emergencies occur in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, the response will often require the involvement of the devolved administrations. This section outlines the various devolution settlements and the respective civil protection arrangements.

The devolved administrations take on some of the lead government department responsibilities which are carried out by UK government departments in England.

The balance of activity and interaction between the devolved authorities and the UK government in relation to emergencies will depend on the nature of the incident and the devolution settlement. However, the principles of emergency response are the same throughout the UK.

Arrangements in Scotland

The Scottish ministers have devolved responsibilities related to managing the consequences of emergencies in Scotland. Scottish emergency response arrangements are based on the same principles as those that apply elsewhere in the UK.

The Scottish emergency co-ordination arrangements set out the structure for an integrated response to an emergency in Scotland. The arrangements provide for Scottish ministers to act as a focus for communications with the UK government.

A strategic co-ordinating group may be established in each police force area to determine the strategy for the response and the appropriate management structures to co-ordinate the local inter-agency response.

Scottish ministers may open the Scottish government resilience room (SGoRR), which will gather and disseminate information, co-ordinate activity and provide appropriate guidance/support the Scottish response to emergencies. It will provide a national picture of the impact of the emergency which, in turn, can be used to advise and inform decisions on the strategic management of the situation for Scottish and UK government.

This chapter also addresses:

- cross-border co-operation
- media arrangements
- recovery arrangements

[Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>): chapter 10 — arrangements in Scotland.

Useful documents

- [Civil Contingencies Act 2004: devolution concordat with Scottish ministers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-contingencies-act-2004-devolution-concordat-with-scottish-ministers) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-contingencies-act-2004-devolution-concordat-with-scottish-ministers>)
- [Emergency preparedness](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness>): chapter 10 — Scotland
- [Scottish Executive website](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/) (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/>)
- [Scottish Executive Justice Department Civil Emergencies website](http://www.readyscotland.org/) (<http://www.readyscotland.org/>)

Arrangements in Wales

The Welsh government plays an important role in emergencies in or affecting Wales.

The pan-Wales response plan sets out the arrangements for the pan-Wales level integration of the Welsh response to an emergency in or affecting Wales.

The Wales Civil Contingencies Committee (WCCC) is constituted and functions in a similar way to its counterparts in England. The Welsh government provides support for the Wales Civil Contingencies Committee.

The Emergency Co-ordination Centre (Wales) (ECC(W)) is a facility established by the Welsh government to gather and disseminate information in Wales on developing emergencies. It supports the Wales Civil Contingencies Committee and Welsh ministers in providing briefing and advice on emergencies.

The Welsh government Communications Division will act as a link between the local media and community relations lead, and, the UK government's News Co-ordination Centre and UK government department media teams where appropriate.

Response arrangements at the local level in Wales are the same as those in England but take into account devolved functions.

If emergency regulations are made covering Wales, the UK government must appoint a Wales emergency co-ordinator.

[Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>): chapter 11 — arrangements in Wales.

Useful documents

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- [Civil Contingencies Act 2004: concordat between the UK government and the Welsh Assembly government \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-contingencies-act-2004-concordat-between-the-uk-government-and-the-welsh-government\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-contingencies-act-2004-concordat-between-the-uk-government-and-the-welsh-assembly-government)
- [Emergency preparedness: \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness): chapter 11 — Wales
- [National Assembly for Wales website \(http://new.wales.gov.uk/splash\)](http://new.wales.gov.uk/splash)

Arrangements in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Executive plays an important role in emergencies in or affecting Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland emergency response and recovery arrangements are based on the same principles that apply elsewhere in the UK.

Northern Ireland has its own unique administrative arrangements. Details such as the identities of organisations which deliver emergency responses and the arrangements for inter-agency co-ordination differ from arrangements elsewhere in the UK.

Emergency response and recovery is carried out at local levels by the emergency services, district councils and other public service organisations such as the local office or agency of a government department.

At the Northern Ireland level, the strategic response is provided by the emergency services, the Northern Ireland Office or the Northern Ireland Executive, depending on the type of emergency.

Arrangements are in place to trigger the Northern Ireland Central Crisis Management Arrangements (NICCMA) in response to actual or anticipated emergencies, and to scale up the level of co-ordination if the situation demands it.

Strategic co-ordination at the Northern Ireland level is delivered by the Crisis Management Group (CMG) and supporting machinery.

The central crisis management machinery is supported by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, which will establish the Northern Ireland central operations room, if required.

In the most challenging emergencies, especially where they affect the whole of the UK, the NICCMA would link to the UK arrangements.

[Emergency response and recovery \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery): chapter 12 — arrangements in Northern Ireland.

Useful documents

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- [Emergency preparedness \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness): Chapter 12 — Northern Ireland
- [Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Policy Branch website \(http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/making-government-work/civil-contingencies.htm\)](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/making-government-work/civil-contingencies.htm)
- [Central government's concept of operations \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations) — document setting out the arrangements for the response to emergencies with a specific annex (B) on arrangements in Northern Ireland
- [A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland \(PDF, 1.56MB\) \(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85875/aguidetoemergencyplanningarrangements.pdf\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85875/aguidetoemergencyplanningarrangements.pdf) (PDF, 4.95 MB, 148 pages)

Central government arrangements

In some instances, the scale or complexity of an emergency is such that some degree of central government support or co-ordination becomes necessary. Central government will not duplicate the role of local responders who remain the basic building block of the response to an emergency.

A designated lead government department (LGD) or, where appropriate, a devolved administration, will be made responsible for the overall management of the central government response. In the most serious cases, the central government response will be co-ordinated through the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR).

The balance of activity between UK central government and the devolved administrations will depend on the nature of the emergency and the terms of the devolution settlements.

The central government's concept of operations sets out the UK arrangements for responding to and recovering from emergencies, irrespective of cause or location and requiring co-ordinated central government action. It describes how the UK central government response will be organised, and the relationship between the central, sub-national and local tiers in England, as well as the relationship between the UK central government and the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It focuses primarily on the response to no-notice or short notice emergencies requiring UK central government engagement, although the approach outlined here can be adapted to manage the response to other crises.

The document was originally approved by ministers in 2005, and this updated version (2010) reflects revised arrangements in light of recent national emergencies.

[Emergency response and recovery \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery): chapter

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Useful documents

- [Central government's concept of operations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations>) — document setting out the arrangements for the response to emergencies
- [The lead government department and its role — guidance and best practice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-lead-government-departments-responsibilities-for-planning-response-and-recovery-from-emergencies) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-lead-government-departments-responsibilities-for-planning-response-and-recovery-from-emergencies>)

The government runs an emergency response training course. The [Central Government Emergency Response Training Course \(CGERT\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/central-government-emergency-response-training-course-dates) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/central-government-emergency-response-training-course-dates>) aims to equip people with the knowledge, skills and awareness necessary for their role in crisis management at the national strategic level. It is also designed to familiarise those in departmental emergency organisations, in devolved and regional government, and in strategic co-ordination groups with the central response structure and processes.

The directed reading package for module 2 of the course is also very useful for those not planning to attend the course who wish to know more about central government response to emergencies.

Further details of the course are available at the [Emergency Planning College](http://www.epcollege.com/) (<http://www.epcollege.com/>).

Emergency powers

Part 2 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 contains the government's generic emergency powers legislation. Emergency powers are a last-resort option for responding to the most serious of emergencies where existing legislative provision is insufficient. They are a mechanism for making temporary legislation in order to prevent, control or mitigate an aspect or effect of the emergency.

Emergency regulations must be necessary to resolve the emergency and proportionate to the effect or aspect of the emergency they are aimed at. What emergency regulations will contain will depend on the specific requirement arising out of the potential or actual circumstances of the emergency.

There must be no expectation that the government will agree to use emergency powers and planning and response arrangements must assume that they will not be used.

[Emergency response and recovery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-response-and-recovery>): chapter 14 — emergency powers.

Links

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- [The Civil Contingencies Act 2004](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/contents) (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/contents>) — full text
- [Central government's concept of operations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-central-government-s-concept-of-operations>) — document setting out the arrangements for the response to emergencies

Future updates

To ensure the 'Emergency response and recovery' guidance continues to reflect both good practice and lessons learnt it will be updated as required. For practical reasons the guidance is only being published online. To ensure good version control the resilience community gateway will be used to notify the civil protection community of any updates and highlight what changes have been made.

The guidance shown on this page will always be the latest version of the document. The latest version of 'Emergency response and recovery' is version 4. This was last updated in July 2012. The version number and the date each version was updated are displayed on the footer of each page of the document.

Supporting guidance

'Emergency response and recovery' is designed to complement 'Emergency preparedness', which sets out how the duties under the CCA and its supporting regulations should be implemented. 'Emergency response and recovery' focuses on practical considerations, guiding principles and good practice for effective emergency response and recovery.

Further details on the CCA regime are available:

- [Expectations and indicators of good practice set for category 1 and 2 responders](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders>) provides a detailed check-list for category 1 and 2 responders

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Related content

[Emergency preparedness \(/government/publications/emergency-preparedness\)](/government/publications/emergency-preparedness)

[Expectations and indicators of good practice set for category 1 and 2 responders \(/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders\)](/government/publications/expectations-and-indicators-of-good-practice-set-for-category-1-and-2-responders)

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[National Recovery Guidance](#) ([/guidance/national-recovery-guidance](#))

[How voluntary organisations can help in emergencies](#) ([/guidance/how-volunteers-can-help-in-emergencies](#))

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