Minding Your Own Business?

Planning for Major Incidents and Emergencies

A Guide for Local Businesses and Voluntary Organisations

Introduction

This guide is designed to increase understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the emergency services and the local authority during a major incident and highlight some ideas for writing your own Business Continuity Management (BCM) Plan.

What is a Major Incident?

A major incident is any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or all of the emergency services and will generally include the involvement, either directly or indirectly, of large numbers of people.

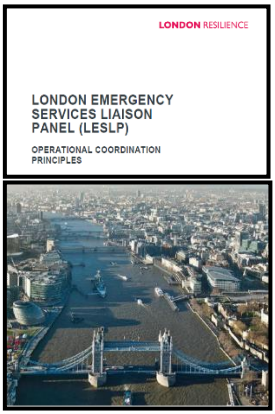
Other Emergencies

Smaller scale incidents can also require an emergency response that can affect your organisation. Fires, gas leaks and burst water mains can cause significant issues for any organisation, as can disruption to the transport system or the supply of utilities, communications or fuel.

Sometimes you can find your business is within a police cordon even though it hasn't been damaged itself by the impact of the incident.

For an effective response to a major incident, it is vital that a variety of agencies work together in a co-ordinated manner.

Section One – LESLP Summary



This document provides a summary of the information contained with the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP) Major Incident Procedure Manual which has been developed for such situations in London.

A full copy of the LESLP Manual can be found at:
Planning for emergencies in the capital | London City Hall

Where you can also access additional London Plans and Frameworks including the LESLP principles via the above link.

Section Two – How You Might Be Impacted Highlights a number of issues which you should consider when developing your Business Continuity Management plans.

This section does not include all the issues which should be considered but describes a number of the most important that are related to working with the emergency services and the local authority during a major incident.

This guide should be read alongside the BCM advice, guidance and templates provided at:

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/businessemergencies

SECTION ONE – LESLP SUMMARY

Most major incidents can be considered to have **four** phases:

- the initial response
- the consolidation phase
- the recovery phase; and
- the restoration of normality

Roles and Responsibilities

Whilst individual organisations and agencies will have specific responsibilities the combined response should seek:

- To save life
- To prevent escalation of the disaster
- To relieve suffering
- To safeguard the environment
- To protect property
- To facilitate criminal investigation and judicial, public technical or other inquiries
- To maintain normal services at an appropriate level
- To inform the public
- To promote self-help and recovery
- To restore normality as soon as possible
- To evaluate the response and identify lessons to be learned

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

The primary areas of police responsibility at a major incident are:

- The saving of life together with the other emergency services
- The coordination of the emergency services, local authorities and other organisations responding to an incident
- To secure, protect and preserve the scene and control sightseers and traffic through the use of cordons
- The investigation of the incident and obtaining and securing evidence in conjunction with other investigative bodies where applicable
- The collection of casualty information such as names, dates of birth, addresses, next of kin and hospital conveyed to if appropriate, in conjunction with other services
- The identification of the dead on behalf of His Majesty's (HM) Coroner
- The prevention of crime
- Family liaison
- Short-term measures to restore normality after all necessary actions have been taken

London Fire Brigade (LFB)

The primary areas of LFB responsibility at a major incident are:

- Saving of life through search and rescue
- Firefighting and fire prevention
- Rendering humanitarian services
- Detection, identification, monitoring and management of hazardous materials and protecting the environment
- Provision of qualified scientific advice in relation to HAZMAT (hazardous materials) incidents via their scientific advisors
- Salvage and damage control
- Safety management within the inner cordon

- To maintain emergency service cover throughout the LFB area and return to a state of normality at the earliest time
- To provide community engagement and reassurance

London Ambulance Service (LAS)

The primary areas of responsibility for the LAS at a major incident may be summarised as:

- To save life together with the other emergency services
- To provide immediate life-saving intervention, treatment, stabilisation and care of casualties at the scene
- To treat those involved as individuals and respond to their needs as such
- To provide appropriate transport, medical staff, equipment and resources
- To establish an effective triage system to determine the priority and evacuation needs of those injured and to establish a safe location for immediate life-saving interventions and casualty care
- To provide a focal point at the incident for all National Health Service (NHS) and other medical resources
- To provide communication facilities for NHS resources at the scene
- To nominate and alert the receiving hospitals including major trauma centres
- To coordinate the transportation of those injured to definitive care
- To maintain emergency cover throughout the LAS area and return to a state of normality at the earliest time
- To act as a portal into the wider health services including UK Health Security Agency

Local Authority

The local authority acts in support and in partnership with the emergency services. Subject to statutory duties to provide certain services, the local authorities may be able to:

- Social care and psychosocial support
- Provision of emergency centres
- Rehousing and accommodation needs
- Welfare and financial support
- Technical and engineering advice (e.g. structural engineering and building control)
- Highways and transport services
- Public health and environmental services
- Recovery Management

Other Agencies

In a major incident, there is the potential for a wide range of agencies to be involved, depending on the type and scale of the incident.

These can include:

- **Environment Agency** especially if there is flooding from rivers or there is pollution or contamination of the environment
- **Utilities companies** if there is disruption to supplies, or there is a threat of disruption to critical services
- **Transport companies** either because they are directly involved or because their resources are needed for evacuation, etc
- **UKHSA** can provide advice to mitigate the impact of the incident on the health of the community

- **GLA** play a key role in warning and informing the public during an emergency in London.

Command and Control

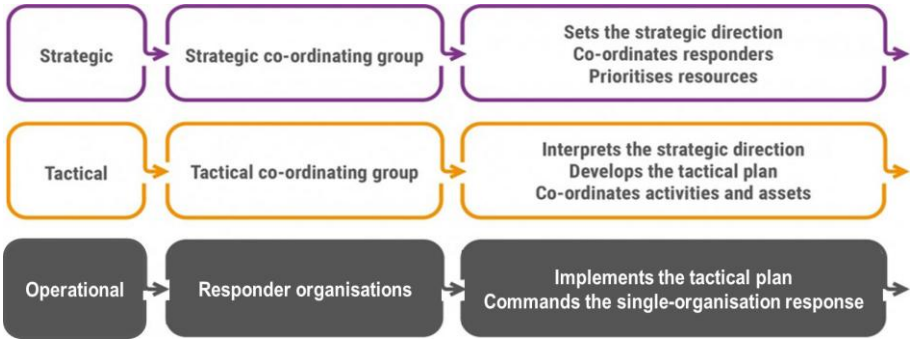
The LESLP Manual manages the response to a major incident through a "Strategic", "Tactical" and "Operational" command structure (also known as "Gold", "Silver" and "Bronze").

Each agency responding to the incident will have representation at all three levels.

Strategic (Gold) level officers deal with issues which will include deciding policy and priorities. This group will determine the strategy to respond to the incident, deciding what needs to be done, setting goals and objectives. This group will convene away from the incident site.

Tactical (Silver) level officers deal with the issues and control of events at or near to the scene of the incident and so will necessarily convene nearby at a safe distance. This group will determine the tactics to resolve the incident in accordance with the strategy, deciding on how things will be done, devising the process for delivering the strategic goals.

Operational (Bronze) level officers will comprise numerous specialists with responsibility at or near the scene. They are responsible for the implementation of the tactical decisions, producing the activity to achieve the strategic goals.

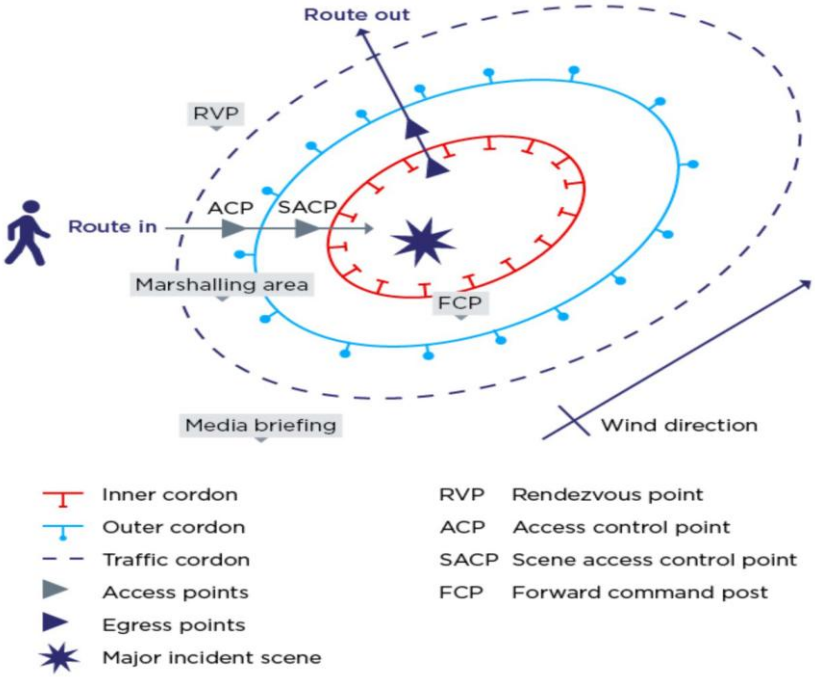


From the LESLP Manual

Scene Management and Cordons

The type of incident will have a significant bearing upon the extent and nature of a scene (or scenes if there are multiple incidents at the same time) and consequently the resources necessary to manage it.

In order to establish control of the incident scene, a number of cordons may be initiated as shown in the following extract from the LESLP Manual.



The size and extent of the cordon areas will be dependant upon the nature of the incident but could result in a substantial area being inaccessible.
Whilst the principal emphasis must be on the response to and not the cause of incidents, there will be subsequent need for investigation, which may mean that cordons could be in place for a significant period.

The Police may regard the scene as a crime or critical incident scene, and a Senior Investigating Officer will be nominated at an early stage. The London Fire Brigade, the Health and Safety Executive and / or other relevant agencies may have a duty of investigation, dependant upon the type of incident.

Recovery Phase



With every incident there comes a time when the emergency services have completed their work at the scene and begin to withdraw. This is the point at which the local authority will formally lead the recovery phase for the incident and the local community.

A Recovery Management Group will be established away from the incident site and will work to consider the recovery issues from the emergency.

All responding and affected agencies and organisations, as well as some community representation, will be involved in this process.

SECTION TWO – HOW YOU MIGHT BE IMPACTED

This part of the guide gives some information on some of the potential impacts on your organisation if you are directly or indirectly involved in an emergency or major incident.

Information

If your organisation is the only premises affected by an emergency, you can expect direct involvement and interaction with the emergency services. In the initial stages they are likely to want access to the following types of information:

- Building Layout / Plans #
- Location and Type of potentially hazardous materials #
- Access routes #
- Someone with whom they can liaise – it is important that someone who has decision-making authority is easily recognisable (e.g. wearing a "hi-visibility" jacket) and accessible nearby
- Confirmation that the building is empty

A useful template for compiling the information marked # is available to download from the Royal Greenwich website at:
www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/businessemergencies

Things to consider:

- Who will liaise with the emergency services?
- What training might they need?
- Do they have a deputy (to cover leave, or for long periods)?

Liaison

Should the incident affect a wide area rather than a single organisation, then liaison will not be on an individual basis. The responding agencies will aim to get the information to as wide an audience as possible, using the following methods:

- Media: The Police and other responders have plans in place for getting vital information to the media quickly. In large incidents, both local news (e.g. from radio) or 24 hour news channels can be a good source of information.
- Web-sites: The local authority, Police and any affected utilities will post information on their web sites. You may also be able to register for email and / or text message alerts and updates on the incident.
- Relevant Media Platforms: Local authority and Greater London Authority (GLA) will post information that warns, informs and alerts communities.
- Call Centres: Local authorities, Police and affected utilities will have information available to the public available from their normal call centres, although they may publish a separate number specifically for the incident.
- Information Points & Public Meetings: Sometimes there is a need for a direct "face to face" communication medium, and so the local authority may set up a permanent information point or organise a public meeting dependent on the needs of the incident.

Things to consider:

- Do you know the contact details for the Local Authority?
- Do you know the key websites, which will provide information during an incident?
- Do you have the capability to access these information sources away from your normal premises?

Communications

It is always important to be able to keep in contact with your staff and other key stakeholders in your organisation. This is never truer than during an emergency, which could happen at any time of day or night, any day of the week.

As past experience has shown, the mobile phone networks can become overloaded or otherwise unavailable during an incident, and other forms of communication can similarly be compromised (e.g. severing of telephone and fibre-optic broadband lines.

Therefore, it is important that you have easily accessible up to date contact lists (with multiple contact methods) for your staff and key stakeholders.

Things to consider:

- How will you keep in contact with staff and stakeholders?
- Do you have multiple methods of contacting staff and stakeholders?
- Do these contact details cover emergencies outside of normal working hours?
- Do you have easy access to the contact details you may need, even if access to your workplace is unavailable?

Contact lists are one of a number of items that are among the suggested contents of an Emergency Pack. Full details of these contents, and where the Pack should be held, may be found at:
www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/businessemergencies

Cordons

Cordons can be in place for days or weeks. In some cases, it may be possible to arrange limited access to retrieve essential items, but this is not always possible. Access is extremely unlikely in the event of a terrorist incident or where the building is structurally unsafe. The Police manning the cordon or the local authority will be able to advise whether access is going to be possible to arrange.

Therefore, it is important to have arrangements in place in case you are denied access to your premises for a significant period.

Things to consider:

- Do you have alternative accommodation from which you can maintain your organisation?
- Will this be for all employees, or just for critical activities?
- Are your employees aware of these arrangements?
- Do you have your suppliers / staff contact numbers easily accessible?
- Do you have copies of essential records available elsewhere?

Again, some of these issues can be planned for by having key documents and resources held away from the premises in an Emergency Pack.

Returning to your property

Normally the emergency services will deal with the emergency phase of the incident, handing over responsibility to the local authority in the recovery phase.

Part of this process will be the removal of cordons and allowing access, where safe, to buildings that were within that cordon. Removal of a cordon may happen as a single activity or may be a gradual process as areas are cleared for public access.

The process of handing back premises may be initiated as follows:

1. The London Fire Brigade, possibly supported by the local authority, the Environment Agency and specialist contractors will ensure that the scene is safe.

2. If appropriate the Police will then gather all the evidence required for criminal or civil proceedings.

3. The whole scene (or if it is large - sectors of the scene) will be released back to the local authority, who will co-ordinate with the appropriate agencies (e.g. utilities companies, contractors, etc) for the repair and / or replacement of utility and communication supplies, and the infrastructure e.g. roads, lighting signs.

4. The tenants / owners will then get access to their properties. The local authority will normally be the point of contact for liaison and information during this process, so it is important that you ensure that they have your contact details.

Further information is available from:

For further advice and guidance on creating a Business Continuity Management (BCM) Plan, see:
www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/businessemergencies

This also gives access to templates for:

- A simple **BCM Plan** (along with comprehensive **guidance notes** on how to "fill-in-the-gaps")
- An **Emergency Pack** (this contains a list of suggested key resources to assist you in the immediate response)
- A **Site Plan** (which can be used to show where you have key infrastructure, such as mains switches and stop-cocks, or any hazardous materials on your premises)

It also contains:

- A **Twenty Minute BCM Checklist** (which you can use to validate and enhance any existing plans that you have)
- **Links to other useful websites** including advice from the Environment Agency, Met Office, London Prepared, Cabinet Office, Business Continuity Institute and the Emergency Planning Society

You can also contact the Royal Borough of Greenwich Emergency Planning and Business Continuity team for further information at:

E-mail: emergencyplanningunit@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 8854 8888
Address: The Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street, Woolwich SE18 6HQ