

# Chapter 5

## Emergency planning

### Summary

- Emergency planning is 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 (paragraphs 5.1–5.16).
- The Regulations require plans to contain a procedure for determining whether an emergency has occurred; provision for training key staff; and provision for exercising the plan to ensure it is effective. Procedures should also be put in place to ensure that the plan is reviewed periodically and kept up to date (paragraphs 5.17–5.20, 5.34–5.36 and 5.41–5.44).
- Category 1 responders must have regard to assessments of risk when deciding which plans are required and developing and reviewing the contents of them (paragraph 5.21).
- Emergency plans may take the form of generic plans – which set out the core of a Category 1 responder’s response to any emergency – or specific plans dealing with particular hazards or sites. Category 1 responders will probably adopt a combination of the two (paragraphs 5.23–5.25).
- Multi-agency plans can consolidate partnership working. Multi-agency plans are permitted, and Category 1 responders are required to consider whether it would be appropriate to develop multi-agency plans (paragraphs 5.26–5.28).
- Category 1 responders should involve Category 2 responders – and organisations which are not subject to the Act’s requirements – as appropriate throughout the planning process. Category 1 responders are specifically required to have regard to the activities of relevant voluntary organisations when developing plans (paragraphs 5.32 and 5.58–5.61).
- This chapter outlines a cycle for developing, exercising and reviewing plans. It also sets out good practice in presenting plans (paragraphs 5.46–5.175).

## What the Act and the Regulations require

**5.1** The chief requirement of the Act in regard to emergency planning is to maintain plans to ensure that, if an emergency occurs or is likely to occur, each Category 1 responder body can deliver its functions so far as necessary or desirable for the purpose of preventing the emergency, reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects, or taking other action in connection with it.<sup>1</sup>

**5.2** Three aspects of performing the organisation's functions in an emergency are identified:

- maintaining plans for preventing the emergency;
- maintaining plans for reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects; and
- maintaining plans for taking other action in connection with the emergency.

### Maintain plans for preventing an emergency

**5.3** The first part of the duty to maintain plans deals with the short time before an emergency occurs, when it might be avoided by prompt or decisive action. Plans should be maintained for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency is likely to occur, the organisation can perform its functions to prevent the emergency.<sup>2</sup>

**5.4** Prevention, in this context, means carrying out the functions of the organisation in such a way as to prevent an emergency which is imminent, or which might be predicted, from occurring at all. Emergencies under this aspect of the Act should be 'nipped in the bud' in the way that fire-fighters stop a fire from spreading. Preventative actions may be identified from dynamic risk assessments at the time of an emergency.

**5.5** Other examples of prevention include actions such as those taken by the ambulance service and other emergency services when they mobilise proactively on New Year's Eve, so as to be ready to deal with potential incidents. Public health organisations taking action proactively to immunise against the spread of influenza in the winter

months would be a further example in this context of prevention.

**5.6** What the Act does not do is impose a duty on Category 1 responders to prevent all emergencies, nor does it require these organisations to undertake remedial works which might prevent a possible emergency at some future date. Such actions may be desirable and they may be a logical outcome of the risk assessment process at the risk treatment stage, but they are not required by the Act.

### Maintain plans for reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency

**5.7** The central part of the main planning duty under the Act is to ensure that the organisation can perform its functions so as to reduce, control or mitigate the effects of an emergency.<sup>3</sup>

**5.8** Plans for reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency begin by addressing the disruption which is the impact of the event. This may be an event having a sudden impact or one which has a slow build-up. The effects of the emergency will be reduced by the remedial actions taken by the Category 1 responders. These will include actions to stem the emergency at source, such as fighting fires, or combating the release of toxic chemicals, the spread of disease or the extent of floods. Plans may specify the use of local teams with specialist equipment to perform these tasks.

**5.9** The plan aims to bring order to the response operation. It is concerned with providing a framework for management, co-ordination and control within which teams of local specialists can go about their work. It identifies:

- the roles and responsibilities of teams (Gold, Silver and Bronze) from within the organisation and from partner organisations;
- how their activities are co-ordinated;
- the communications plan and contact details;
- the alerting and mobilising procedures;
- the facilities and equipment available, and their locations;
- how additional resources may be obtained, if required;

<sup>1</sup> s. 2(1)(d)

<sup>2</sup> s. 2(1)(d)(i)

<sup>3</sup> s. 2(1)(d)(ii)

- how to support and protect staff; and
- a crisis management strategy from response through to recovery.<sup>4</sup>

**5.10** Plans for ensuring that the effects of an emergency are mitigated ensure direct interventions which, for example, protect or remove people from the full impact of the emergency. For instance, by rescuing people from the scene, or evacuating them and treating their injuries, or providing them with shelter and comfort, or arranging for an orderly return to the scene when it is safe. Again, plans may need to specify specialist teams and procedures to achieve this.

**5.11** Recovery plans also mitigate the effects of an emergency. They are invoked and begin to operate at the same time as response plans. An outline of recovery planning is contained in the government publication, *Recovery: An Emergency Management Guide*.<sup>5</sup>

## Maintain plans for taking other action in connection with an emergency

**5.12** The distinction between mitigating the effects of an emergency and dealing with its secondary impacts is not clear-cut. Also, some subordinate arrangements and procedures in support of emergency plans might not be captured by the earlier two requirements. What the Act achieves by including a third duty to maintain plans for taking other action in connection with an emergency is to ensure that there can be no doubt that these types of secondary plan and supportive procedure are required by statute.

**5.13** For example, not all actions to be taken in preparing for an emergency are directly concerned with controlling, reducing or mitigating its effects. Emergency planning has to concern itself not only with the immediate response to, and extended recovery from, an emergency, but also with its secondary impacts. The wave of reaction can be quite overwhelming in terms of, for example, media attention and public response. Handling public

interest in how the Category 1 responders are tackling the emergency, and assisting in recovery from it, can be almost as demanding for the responders as the emergency itself. Most of these issues are dealt with in Chapter 7.

**5.14** The procedures required under this provision of the Act in support of plans may also include subordinate or incidental arrangements necessary to the development of effective response plans. For example, procedures may be needed variously to:

- develop emergency control centres;
- develop reliable internal communications or information management systems for effective response;
- bind private contractors into the emergency plans;
- ensure the welfare of staff engaged in response; and
- ensure that sufficient resources (eg human, material, financial) are available when needed.

## Plan maintenance procedures

**5.15** The maintenance of plans involves more than their preparation. Once a plan has been prepared, it must be maintained for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs, or is likely to occur, the Category 1 responder is able to perform its functions to deal with it.<sup>6</sup>

**5.16** Plan maintenance procedures must be developed to ensure that plans are kept up to date.

## Procedure for determining whether an emergency has occurred to which a Category 1 responder should respond

**5.17** The definition of emergency in section 1 of the Act is concerned with the scale of consequences in terms of serious damage to human welfare, the environment and security.<sup>7</sup> An exercise of judgement is required to determine whether or not an event or situation falls within the definition.

<sup>4</sup>A similar list is provided in *The Lead Government Department and Its Role: Guidance and Best Practice*, Chapter 6, where it describes roles and responsibilities for lead government departments (p23, para 2), (Cabinet Office, March 2004)

<sup>5</sup>*Recovery: An Emergency Management Guide*, Home Office, 2000

<sup>6</sup>s. 2(1)(d)

<sup>7</sup>s. 1(1)

**5.18** Accordingly, as described in Chapter 1, the Act imposes a duty to maintain an emergency plan only if it is likely, in the face of the emergency, that the Category 1 responder:

- would consider it necessary or desirable to respond; and
- would be unable to do so without redeploying or obtaining additional resources.<sup>8</sup>

**5.19** Any emergency plan maintained by a Category 1 responder must include a procedure for determining whether an emergency has occurred that makes it necessary or desirable for it to perform its functions for the purpose of dealing with an emergency.<sup>9</sup>

**5.20** The procedure required is spelt out in the Regulations.<sup>10</sup> It must:

- enable the identification of the person who should determine whether an emergency has occurred – this will usually be a person qualified by position or training and identified as a post-holder by title or role;
- specify the procedure which that person should adopt in taking that decision;
- specify any persons who should be consulted about the decision; and
- specify the persons who should be informed about the decision.

## Have regard to risk assessment

**5.21** The Act requires Category 1 responders from time to time to assess whether the risk of an emergency might make it necessary or expedient for them to perform any of their functions.<sup>11</sup> Plans must be maintained to ensure that they are able to perform those functions when necessary or desirable for the purpose of dealing with an emergency, if one occurs or is likely to occur.<sup>12</sup> The Regulations explicitly link the two duties. They require a Category 1 responder to have regard to any relevant assessment of risk when performing its duty to maintain its

emergency plans (and also its business continuity plans – see Chapter 6).<sup>13</sup>

## Have regard to arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public

**5.22** The Act requires Category 1 responders to maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public at the time of an emergency. In developing and maintaining their emergency plans, Category 1 responders must have regard to their relevant warning arrangements and provisions for informing and advising the public.<sup>14</sup>

## Generic and specific plans

**5.23** Annex 4B contains a classification of hazards and threats. It identifies a small number of generic hazards or threats and a much larger number of examples of each. It would not be sensible to require Category 1 responders to prepare a specific plan for each of these possible events. Therefore, the Regulations distinguish between a single plan which relates to any emergency<sup>15</sup> and plans which relate to a particular emergency or a particular kind of emergency.<sup>16</sup>

**5.24** Generic plans are the core plans which enable a Category 1 responder to perform its functions in relation to a wide range of possible scenarios.

**5.25** A plan which relates to a particular emergency or a particular kind of emergency is usually known as a specific plan. Specific plans are a detailed set of arrangements designed to go beyond the generic arrangements when the latter are likely to prove insufficient in a particular case. A specific plan usually relies on a generic plan. Category 1 responders should use assessments of the nature of the risk to decide whether specific plans are necessary or desirable.

<sup>8</sup> s. 2(2)(b)

<sup>9</sup> regulation 24(2)

<sup>10</sup> regulation 24(3)

<sup>11</sup> s. 2(1)(b)

<sup>12</sup> s. 2(1)(d)

<sup>13</sup> regulation 19

<sup>14</sup> regulation 20

<sup>15</sup> regulation 21(b)

<sup>16</sup> regulation 21(a)

## Multi-agency plans

**5.26** A multi-agency plan is a plan maintained by more than one Category 1 responder acting jointly.<sup>17</sup> Multi-agency plans are developed in a situation where the partners agree that, for a successful combined response, they need a formal set of procedures governing them all.

**5.27** These plans may be generic, as when they describe the control and co-ordination procedures for combined response to an emergency, including, for example, the procedures for setting up joint strategic or tactical control centres. They may also be specific. Thus evacuation by the police of a central area may be unworkable without the carefully pre-planned co-operation of various other Category 1 responders, such as fire and ambulance services and the highways department of the local authority, and the involvement too of some Category 2 responders, including transport organisations, such as train and bus companies, under their own regulations.

**5.28** Category 1 responders within an LRF whose functions are engaged by a particular emergency must consider whether the appropriate way to perform their duty to maintain an emergency plan is by way of a multi-agency plan.<sup>18</sup>

## Joint discharge of functions and other forms of collaborative working

**5.29** The duty to maintain plans for preventing, reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of, or taking other action in connection with, an emergency falls on all Category 1 responders. But the Regulations permit them to collaborate with others in delivering the duty.

**5.30** There are several options for Category 1 responders in deciding how best to discharge their responsibility.<sup>19</sup> They may decide to undertake the task:

- on their own;
- collaboratively, by agreeing with partners to act under the leadership of a lead responder;<sup>20</sup>
- jointly, by making arrangements with another Category 1 or Category 2 responder;<sup>21</sup>
- by delegating the task to another Category 1 or Category 2 responder.<sup>22</sup>

**5.31** They may also support collaborative arrangements with the use of protocols.<sup>23</sup>

## Have regard to voluntary organisations

**5.32** Category 1 responders are required to have regard to the activities of relevant voluntary organisations when developing plans. They should ensure that the capabilities of voluntary organisations are considered early on in the plan formulation process. These should be reflected in emergency plans and training and exercising regimes where appropriate.

**5.33** Further guidance on how to involve the voluntary sector in planning frameworks can be found in Chapter 14.

## Plan revision

**5.34** The Act requires Category 1 responders to consider whether a new risk assessment carried out from time to time makes it necessary or expedient to add to or modify their emergency plans.<sup>24</sup> This is a specific route which the Act identifies requiring the revision of plans, in addition to the general requirement to maintain plans.

**5.35** Regulations address the situation where a Minister of the Crown or a devolved administration issues guidance or an assessment in regard to the risk of an emergency. Where the Minister does so, then Category 1 responders must consider whether that makes it necessary or expedient for them to revise

<sup>17</sup> regulation 22

<sup>18</sup> regulation 22

<sup>19</sup> regulation 23

<sup>20</sup> regulations 9–11

<sup>21</sup> regulation 8(a)

<sup>22</sup> regulation 8(b)

<sup>23</sup> regulation 7

<sup>24</sup> s. 2(1)(e)

their plans.<sup>25</sup> An example might be guidance or an assessment about a terrorist threat.

**5.36** The powers of the Minister are considered further in Chapter 16.

## Arrange for the publication of all or part of plans

**5.37** Category 1 responders are required to arrange for the publication of all or part of plans maintained under the Act in so far as publication is necessary or desirable for the purpose of dealing with an emergency.<sup>26</sup>

**5.38** Category 1 responders may choose to publish the whole of an emergency plan, or only part of that plan, in so far as publication in either case will help in, for example, mitigating an emergency. Effectively, this means that the decision to publish may be focused on those parts of the plan which it is useful for the public to know. Where the plan contains a summary of the risk assessment on which it is based, publication of this summary also may satisfy the requirement to publish a part of the risk assessment. These matters are discussed further in Chapter 7.

## Existing emergency planning duties

**5.39** The Regulations identify three pieces of legislation pre-dating this Act which were introduced separately in Britain and Northern Ireland under sector-specific legislation operated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and HSE Northern Ireland. These relate to major accident hazards at industrial establishments (Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH)), to hazardous pipelines (Pipelines Safety Regulations) and to radiation hazards (Radiation (Emergency Preparation and Public Information) Regulations (REPPER)).

**5.40** These sector-specific Regulations have established multi-agency emergency planning regimes in co-operation with the operators, which are specific, well defined and in some respects more

prescriptive than the emergency planning requirements contained in this Act. To avoid duplication, the Regulations provide that the duty to maintain plans under the Act does not apply to emergencies which are dealt with by these pieces of legislation.<sup>27</sup>

## Training and exercises

**5.41** The Regulations require a plan to include provision for the carrying out of exercises<sup>28</sup> and for the training of staff or other persons.<sup>29</sup> This means that relevant planning documents must contain a statement about the nature of the training and exercising to be provided and its frequency.

**5.42** The Regulations clarify the requirement in regard to arrangements for exercises. Exercises should ensure that the emergency plans are effective.<sup>30</sup>

**5.43** The Regulations also clarify the requirement in regard to arrangements for training. Training<sup>31</sup> should be provided for:

- an appropriate number of suitable personnel of the Category 1 responder; and
- other persons whom the responder considers necessary. This could include contractors with a role in the plans and also civil protection partners, both statutory and non-statutory, who have a role in the plans.

**5.44** The same or similar requirements for exercising and training apply too to Business Continuity plans (as discussed in Chapter 6) and arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public (as discussed in Chapter 7).

<sup>25</sup> regulation 26

<sup>26</sup> s. 2(1)(f)

<sup>27</sup> regulation 12

<sup>28</sup> regulation 25(a)

<sup>29</sup> regulation 25(b)

<sup>30</sup> regulation 25(a)

<sup>31</sup> regulation 25(b)

## How the requirements of the Act and the Regulations may be carried out

**5.45** This section outlines how the Government believes the duties described may best be carried out. It describes good practice. Category 1 responders must have regard to this guidance.<sup>32</sup>

### The cycle of emergency planning

**5.46** Emergency planning is a systematic and ongoing process, preparing organisations for response to emergencies. It evolves as lessons are learnt and circumstances change.

**5.47** It is usual to view emergency planning as part of a cycle of activities beginning with establishing a risk profile to help determine what should be the priorities for developing plans and ending with review and revision, which then re-starts the whole cycle. Figure 5.1 has been adapted from earlier versions of the same diagram.<sup>33</sup> The lower circle outlines the plan preparation process and the upper circle the life of the plan once it is issued and circulated. Embedding the plans within the management culture of the organisation is vital to ensuring effective response on the day of an emergency. Equally vital is to maintain the plans as circumstances change and to ensure that awareness of the plans is renewed as they are revised.

**5.48** Both circles of the 'figure of eight' in Figure 5.1 can stand independently of each other. In other words, the plan preparation cycle in the lower circle is continuous and repeated until the plan is ready for dissemination. And the life cycle of the plan after circulation continues several times round the upper circle until a review indicates the need to prepare a new version. The occurrence of an emergency provides, of

course, the true test of the plan, including how far managers and operational personnel are guided by it.

**5.49** All the various elements of this cycle are explored in the following guidance and in the previous chapter on risk assessment. Broadly, in accordance with the provisions of the Act and on the basis of initial hazard analysis and risk assessment, and their experience of local emergencies, the Category 1 responders' senior management defines the purpose of the plan. It determines whether a plan is needed and what priority should be given to it. More detailed risk assessment is part of the information-gathering process, which also includes liaison and co-operation with partner organisations to clarify their respective roles and the availability of resources. Consultation within the organisation and with partners takes place throughout the plan preparation process. It continues around the lower circle of the 'figure of eight' until the plan is agreed and is ready to be issued.

**5.50** The next paragraphs discuss the purpose of plans and the implications of deriving them more firmly from risk assessment. There is then an extensive discussion of the different types of plan and in what ways they are useful. The lower circle of Figure 5.1 is then completed by some suggestions on how to prepare a plan.

### Defining the purpose of a plan

**5.51** The purpose of an emergency plan is to serve organisations engaged in response, within the local community at the time of an emergency. Its aim is to increase resilience by ensuring that all those charged with tackling the emergency on behalf of the community:

- know their role;
- are competent to carry out the tasks assigned to them;
- have access to available resources and facilities; and
- have confidence that their partners in response are similarly prepared.

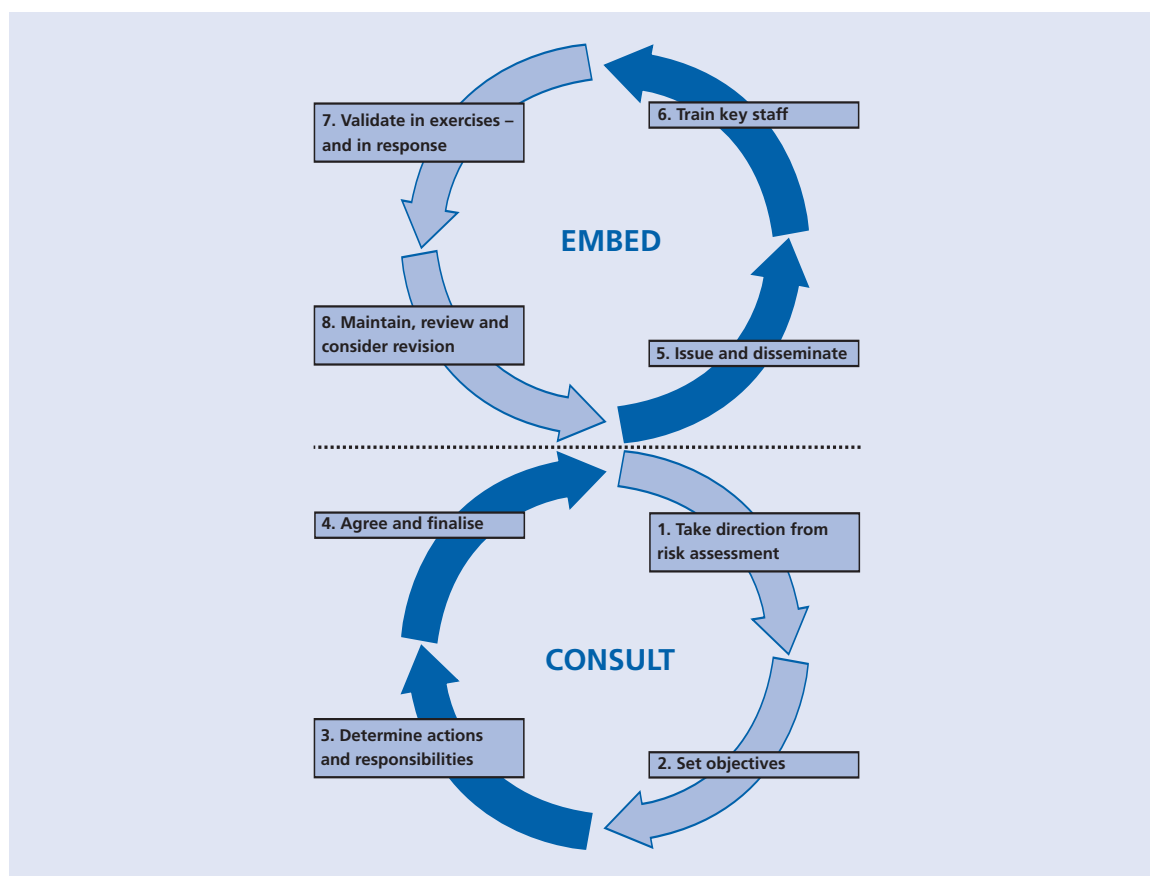
#### Box 5.1: Further advice and information

Also included in this chapter is further advice about emergency planning and useful information that is not supported directly by the Act. There is therefore no direct obligation under the Act for responders to have regard to it. These sections of text are distinguished by inclusion in a text box like this one.

<sup>32</sup> s. 3(3)(b)

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, *The Lead Government Department and Its Role*, pp20–22, which contains a full description of the cycle

Figure 5.1: The cycle of emergency planning



A further aim is to ensure that the members of the community affected by the emergency:

- are aware of what may happen;
- have confidence in the emergency responders; and
- know what they themselves should do.

**5.52** There is an obligation on the management of Category 1 responders when identifying the need for an emergency plan, or the modification of an existing one, to assess the extent to which the emergency will place particular demands on their resources and capacity. It will require flexible use of what they have and arrangements to mobilise assistance from wherever it is available.

**5.53** In deciding whether to prepare a new emergency plan – or to revise or maintain an existing one – the Category 1 responder should examine its existing generic and specific emergency planning arrangements and see to what extent these meet the circumstances or the scenario under discussion.

**5.54** Where plans are developed in partnership across Category 1 responders, co-ordination and co-operation at management level are essential.

**5.55** Once the decision to prepare or modify an emergency plan has been made, the following considerations may be helpful. A written plan and associated support material can assist internal management of emergency arrangements by serving as:

- a concise description of how a special mobilisation of Category 1 responders, divisions, departments, teams and officers will be carried out;
- a record of key decisions agreed with and between the main parties to the plan, which will evolve and change over a number of years;<sup>34</sup>
- a guide for briefing, training or exercising personnel so that they are prepared for an emergency and know what has been agreed;
- a series of checklists, references or aides-memoire for senior officers to use at the time of an emergency, if they need it; and

<sup>34</sup>The plan should be supported in files by records of decisions agreed at meetings over the years

- a measure or standard against which the performance of a Category 1 responder and its partners can be assessed.

## Planning for a combined response

**5.56** Each Category 1 responder's plans are its own responsibility. But it is vital that their various plans to deliver particular capabilities fit together and complement each other.

**5.57** Planning for a genuinely combined response across local organisational and cultural boundaries is not an easy task. But the legal framework of the Act and the practical co-operation which it encourages through multi-agency plans and the local resilience forums are both designed to improve consistency.

### The planning role of Category 2 responders

**5.58** Category 2 responders, such as utilities and transport companies, are governed by their own legislation and regulations in regard to emergency planning.

**5.59** However, the requirements of the Act are that they should co-operate with Category 1 responders in the performance of the Category 1 responders' duties and provide information to them in connection with those duties.<sup>35</sup> In consequence, Category 2 responders may be expected to assist the Category 1 responders in all aspects of plan preparation and maintenance. Category 2 responders can be invited to play a part in multi-agency plans and to take part in multi-agency exercises.<sup>36</sup> Requests should seek to minimise the burdens on Category 2 responders who, in turn, should consider them carefully and in a positive manner.

### The role of other organisations engaged in response not named in the Act

**5.60** The lists in Schedule 1 of the Act<sup>37</sup> of the organisations on which the statutory duties fall is by no means exhaustive of all the organisations that may be called upon in an emergency to assist with response.

## Box 5.2: Emergency planning, resources and capabilities

The planning process may throw up some areas where existing capabilities to deal with an emergency are deemed insufficient and additional resources appear to be needed to provide the level of capability desired.

A tension may be revealed between what Category 1 responders consider to be desirable as a result of the risk assessment and plan preparation process, and what the Act actually requires.

Planning should be realistic and based on what the responder can actually provide from the totality of its existing resources, including contractors and dormant contracts, and from mutual aid agreements and other assistance from partner organisations. The Act does not require the Category 1 responders to find from within its own resources whatever level of capability the risk assessment and planning process may suggest is needed.

From a legal perspective, a plan which cannot be implemented will not discharge the legal duty to maintain plans. There is an implied duty to maintain a plan which is effective. It follows that it is better to have a less ambitious plan which works, than a fully comprehensive plan which cannot be implemented for lack of resources.

Please see further discussion of this topic in:

- Box 5.4: Risk assessment and local responder capabilities;
- Box 5.6: Generic capabilities and procedures; and
- Box 5.9: UK Capabilities Programme.

<sup>35</sup> regulation 4(5)

<sup>36</sup> see also paragraph 5.142

<sup>37</sup> Schedule 1, Parts 1 and 3

### Box 5.3: Place of Category 1 responders in the plans and exercises of Category 2 responders

Category 2 responders may also seek co-operation from their Category 1 partners in developing their own plans under their own legislation. Co-operation from Category 1 responders is likely to include provision of information and participation in exercises.

**5.61** An organisation engaged in response that is not named in Schedule 1 is not subject to the requirements of the Act. But this does not mean that it should be discouraged or excluded from co-operation with the Category 1 and 2 responders in developing planning arrangements. On the contrary, where appropriate, it should be included in the Category 1 responders' development of plans. (See also Chapters 14 and 15.)

### Risk assessment and planning

**5.62** Risk assessment under the Act is about the likelihood of an emergency occurring.<sup>38</sup> The only risks with which the Act is concerned and for which plans must be maintained are those which threaten serious damage to human welfare, the environment or security. The aim is to provide each Category 1 responder with the best possible basis from which to fulfil its duty to prepare emergency plans.

**5.63** The various types of emergency, the scale of their effects and their likelihood of occurrence are addressed in Annex 4B. Category 1 responders should identify the capabilities required to deal with the different types of emergency and allocate these between generic and specific plans.

**5.64** Thus, for example, treating the casualties from a prolonged cold weather emergency might require a rapid surge in the health service capacity for providing intensive care. But a rapid expansion in the provision of intensive care is a generic capability that may be required across a number of different types of emergency, including, for example, train crashes or a major industrial accident. The Primary Care Trusts and acute hospitals (and Local Health Boards in Wales) will build this capability into their generic plans, according to the potential demand demonstrated by the risk assessment.

**5.65** As a result of the risk assessment process, Category 1 responders should review their existing emergency plans.<sup>39</sup> The review is likely to:

- highlight weaknesses in some of their existing plans or procedures;
- suggest areas where further work is needed in order to match the type and level of risks identified; and
- reveal the need for new plans, procedures or supporting capabilities in areas where preparations do not currently exist or are clearly inadequate.

The process recurs continually and should be repeated as risk assessments change.

**5.66** Emergency planning tends to be concerned more with consequences than with causes. Emergencies can be grouped according to the type of response their different sets of consequences require, as shown in the table opposite. Response arrangements will be determined by whether resources tend to be concentrated at a single main location or series of locations, or dispersed over a wide area. A further consideration is whether the emergency has a sudden impact or a slow onset.

**5.67** By grouping possible emergencies in this way, responders can use the table as a framework for assessing whether their existing planning arrangements are sound or need improvement. Where a range of emergencies stemming from different causes requires a similar type of plan, this is likely to be a generic plan. Where the emergency requires its own individual plan, this will be a specific plan. The duration of an emergency is a further factor for consideration.

**5.68** A full review of plans will, of course, require reference to the complete taxonomy of emergencies contained in Annex 4B on risk assessment.

<sup>38</sup>What the Act actually says is that Category 1 responders "shall from time to time assess the risk of an emergency occurring" (s. 2(1)(a)).

In legal terms, this means the likelihood of an event or situation which threatens serious damage (s. 1(1)).

<sup>39</sup>s. 2(1)(e)

## Emergencies classified by location and extent of consequences

Type of emergency	Example
<b>A. Single location</b>	
Fixed site	Industrial plant; school; airport; train station; sports stadium; town or city centre
Corridor	Railway; motorway; air corridor; fuel pipeline
Unpredictable	Bomb; chemical tanker; random shooting
<b>B. Multiple locations</b>	
Multiple locations	Linked, possibly simultaneous, explosions at different sites
<b>C. Wide area</b>	
Large area	Toxic cloud; loss of electricity, gas, water, telephone supply; river or coastal flooding; dam or reservoir failure
Whole area	Severe weather; health emergencies, including influenza pandemic; foot-and-mouth
<b>D. Outside area</b>	
External emergency	Residents local to your area involved in an emergency elsewhere, eg coach or plane crash; passenger ship sinking; incident at football stadium
	Evacuees into your area from another UK area
	Refugees from an emergency overseas

### Types of plan

**5.69** The following section describes:

- generic plans;
- specific plans; and
- single-agency, multi-agency and multi-level plans.

**5.70** Most Category 1 responders have a mixture of generic and specific plans. The two work together, with specific plans supported by the generic plan.

**5.71** A danger of relying too much on a generic plan built round generic capabilities is that detailed understanding and preparations in relation to particular hazards and threats could be neglected. Lessons learned from dealing with particular emergencies may not be recorded and built subsequently into revised planning arrangements.

**5.72** A danger of relying too much on specific plans and the capabilities which deliver them is that of inconsistency and duplication, including inefficient use of resources. With specific plans, there can be a further danger of not establishing a clear set of central, corporate capabilities and procedures, transferable across emergencies and easily understood internally and by partner agencies.

**5.73** The table at Annex 5A identifies generic and specific plans, as follows, and gives a few examples:

- **generic** – the core plan for mobilising staff and resources in response to an emergency;
- **generic capability or procedure** – a wide range of capabilities, procedures and teams which may need to be developed in support of the core generic plan;<sup>40</sup>
- **specific hazard or contingency** – plans for particular types of event or situation, identified through the risk assessment, which may occur widely across the local area; and
- **specific site or location** – plans for particular sites or locations in the local area, also identified through the risk assessment.

#### Generic plans

**5.74** Generic plans are core plans which enable a Category 1 responder to perform its functions in relation to a wide range of possible scenarios. General in nature, generic plans are, in the first instance, single-agency plans and are seen as the most important plans for that organisation. But each organisation's generic plan should fit with the generic plans of its partner agencies and may contain references to them. In some local areas, multi-agency

<sup>40</sup> Some of these generic capabilities, such as the provision of rest centres or an emergency mortuary, are often considered to be specific plans. They are included here as part of the generic plan because they support the generic plan

### Box 5.4: Risk assessment and local responder capabilities

For many years, Category 1 responders have tended to deliver a capability in emergencies that is determined by their normal functions. When an emergency occurs, this **function-based** capability is redeployed to deal with the problems posed. If that capability is insufficient, the organisation will seek assistance from neighbouring responder organisations.

What the risk assessment process suggests is that responders should determine the capability required to deal with an emergency not only on the basis of their existing functional capability, but also on the level of risk. This **risk-based** capability for dealing with emergencies is determined by the risk assessment and is delivered through the emergency plans.

However, as the discussion in Box 5.2 above suggests, the Act does not specifically require Category 1 responders to obtain the resources that will deliver the new level of capability.

Capability requirements necessarily change as risk assessments and planning assumptions change. Category 1 responders should consider how their plans and capabilities need to be improved to meet the assessed level of risk.

generic plans have been developed as part of core planning for a combined response.

**5.75** For a Category 1 responder, generic plans deliver four key practical benefits:

- a recognised corporate basis of response for the organisation to any type, or most types, of emergency;
- key supporting elements (that is, capabilities and management procedures) which can be selected from and combined as necessary, depending on the nature of the emergency – and which can be drawn on, too, in support of specific plans;
- a recognised corporate management framework for:
  - awareness-raising throughout the organisation;
  - developing training and exercising throughout the organisation;
  - building ownership of civil protection throughout the organisation; and
  - mainstreaming civil protection within the organisation;
 and
- a recognised corporate management framework for participating with other local partner organisations in the combined response.

A checklist of the minimum number of elements that one would normally expect to see covered in the core generic plan is contained in Annex 5B.

**5.76** Similar benefits from a consistent and standard approach can, of course, be realised across a number of organisations where they combine in developing a multi-agency generic plan.

**5.77** Most Category 1 responders will carry out their main emergency planning responsibility under the Act by preparing a generic plan.

**5.78** All Category 1 responders should ensure that their response plans not only meet their own requirements but also complement the multi-agency integrated major incident response systems, especially command and control, within each Local Resilience Area.

#### Specific plans

**5.79** Specific plans enable a Category 1 responder to move from the general to the particular.

**5.80** The development of a specific plan is a matter for decision by the Category 1 responder.<sup>41</sup> Where the local risk assessment indicates clearly that it is desirable for a particular risk to be addressed in a plan, the Category 1 responder should consider whether a generic plan and supporting capabilities are adequate or should be improved. When changes are needed and a generic plan is not the right place to include them, then a specific plan may be appropriate.

<sup>41</sup> regulation 21

**5.81** Many specific plans, such as for flooding, oil pollution or a stadium incident, are likely to be multi-agency plans. This gives them a particular importance, supported as they are by the core generic plans. It is important that specific plans dovetail and are compatible with those of partner agencies. A checklist of the minimum number of elements which one would expect to see contained in a specific plan is contained at Annex 5C.

**5.82** Specific emergency plans deliver three key practical benefits:

- a more detailed set of procedures designed to go beyond the standard generic procedures, when these are likely to prove inadequate in a particular case;
- a basis for integrated emergency response to a particular situation or scenario across a number of partner organisations; and

## Variations in the delivery of emergency planning arrangements

Some responders (such as the Environment Agency) have moved away from emergency plans as such, and rely on a standard set of incident management procedures. These are applied uniformly across the organisation and engage different levels of management in a standard response procedure depending on the scale and nature of the incident. For the purposes of the Act, these should be treated as generic planning arrangements. Of course, the Act is concerned with emergencies only, rather than with the whole range of incidents.

The National Health Service maintains its emergency planning arrangements through the use of template plans. In practice, its local emergency plans are developed as templates at a national level. These templates are then completed and issued at the local level to reflect the details of the local organisational context. They consist of a combination of generic and specific plans.

### Box 5.5: Emergencies and major incidents

The main planning responsibility required under the Act relates to emergencies which seriously obstruct the normal functions of the responder or demand that action be taken and require a special deployment of resources. Each Category 1 responder must have a plan capable of dealing with an event of this scale, and it must have procedures for activating the plan on a 24-hour basis. This generic plan is supported by a range of generic capabilities.

Hitherto, such events have been known in the UK context as major incidents. When incidents are of such a nature that they severely test the response arrangements of the emergency services and require a special mobilisation of their resources, most are likely to declare a major incident. Partner organisations are immediately informed – and they often (though not always) will declare a major incident too, as part of a combined response.

The Act, the Regulations and this guidance consistently use the term emergency, but there is nothing in the legislation that prevents a responder from continuing to use the term “major incident” in its planning arrangements for response.

The well-established principles which define a major incident have been replicated by various provisions in the Act. The concept of a major incident is captured, in particular, by the test for deciding when the duty to prepare an emergency plan applies (section 2(2)). The Act defines an emergency in such a way as effectively to require a major incident response from one or more of the Category 1 responders. The definition of an emergency provides a defined threshold for emergency planning similar to the major incident concept. It does not require plans for reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of events or situations below this threshold.

### Box 5.6: Generic capabilities and procedures

Capability is the ability to do what is required in an emergency situation.

Generic capabilities and procedures in support of local responders' generic plans deserve particular attention, to ensure that what the generic plan promises can address successfully a wide range of emergencies. For example, in the context of an emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a single block of flats (usually, a minor evacuation) or to evacuate a whole neighbourhood (a major evacuation). Generic capabilities may be needed to be able to deal with both types of demand.

Capability is originally a military term: it covers the people mobilised by a plan, their equipment and training, and also the planning, doctrinal and control frameworks for their actions.

The UK Capabilities Programme has been developed by central government to address the most serious disruptive challenges requiring support from central government. It leads to some capabilities being developed at the local level in support of UK-wide resilience planning, but these are a matter of current government policy and are not a specific requirement of the Act.

See also: Box 5.9 on the UK Capabilities Programme.

- a framework for specific emergency-planning training and exercising addressed to particular situations or scenarios.

#### Plans for specific hazards or contingencies

**5.83** Certain types of emergency require additional knowledge or procedures, which it would be inappropriate to include in a generic plan.

**5.84** For example, an influenza pandemic requires major specialist interventions within the health service, but also draws on a range of Category 1 responders and others. As a result, local multi-agency contingency plans have been promoted by the Department of Health. Again, chemical hazards on the roads, including spillages, may require specialist fire service and chemical industry expertise and equipment, or treatment by private specialist waste firms.

**5.85** Wide-area emergencies, such as major storms, generalised flooding or widespread contamination, build on the standard, generic approach, but can benefit from specific contingency planning. So, too, can slow-building wide-area emergencies, such as severe and prolonged cold weather, drought, or a foot-and-mouth emergency.

#### Plans for specific sites or locations

**5.86** A second type of specific plan can be appropriate for specific sites or locations, where the consequences and impact at the known location are more easily predictable. It is possible to develop detailed plans which, as a result of exercises, can be constantly tested and improved, and changed as physical and organisational arrangements change.

### COMAH, REPPiR and the Pipeline Regulations

These statutory planning arrangements are for major industrial hazard sites, nuclear power stations (including MOD nuclear installations subject to Defence Major Accident Control Regulations) and oil and gas pipeline installations.

The Act places no requirement on Category 1 responders to prepare plans for these events, because the essential relevant organisations already have this statutory responsibility under the HSE legislation. In the event of a COMAH, REPPiR or pipeline event with consequences beyond those that, under HSE legislation, must be prepared for, there is no requirement under the Act for Category 1 responders to prepare plans for this emergency.

However, it is considered that, in practice, Category 1 responders will want voluntarily to integrate planning arrangements under the different statutory regimes at the LRF.

**5.87** The best known examples of site-specific plans are not covered by the duty under the Act to maintain plans because they are covered by sector-specific legislation operated by the HSE.<sup>42</sup>

**5.88** There are other types of specific site, permanent or temporary, where emergency plans may be needed. For example, airports, sports grounds, hospitals, public events or areas where flooding is likely. Particular locations may also need specific plans, such as town or city centres, or coastal areas most vulnerable to pollution from major oil spills.

### Multi-agency plans and the role of a lead Category 1 responder

**5.89** The Act places duties on individual Category 1 responders to prepare emergency plans. However, planning for emergencies is rarely an autonomous activity. There are occasions when Category 1 responders will want to cement integrated emergency management by developing multi-agency plans.

**5.90** The Regulations:

- require Category 1 responders who have a duty in relation to the same emergency to consider whether a multi-agency plan should be developed;<sup>43</sup> and
- permit Category 1 responders to co-operate for the purpose of identifying which of them will take lead responsibility where more than one of them have functions that are exercisable in relation to the same emergency or the same type of emergency.<sup>44</sup>

**5.91** Generally, it will be appropriate for a lead responder to be appointed to develop a multi-agency plan. However, such plans can also be developed by joint working<sup>45</sup> or by delegation.<sup>46</sup>

**5.92** Where they are unable to agree that a multi-agency plan is needed, or which organisation should take the lead responsibility, each has a duty to maintain its own plan.<sup>47</sup>

### Box 5.7: Multi-level plans and the role of the lead government department

A multi-level plan is a plan covering more than one level of government – for example, a national or regional plan. National plans have been or are being developed, for example, for foot-and-mouth, anthrax, rabies, influenza pandemic, marine and coastal pollution and fuel shortages. There is also a national plan for Wales. Regional plans could relate to flooding, severe weather or a crisis affecting a utility.

Ownership of their part of these plans is the responsibility of each of the relevant Category 1 responders, but co-ordination or leadership in the development and execution of these plans is likely to be taken by a national or regional organisation, perhaps relying on one of the local partners (eg the police) to co-ordinate.

The lead government departments will take steps as a matter of policy to publicise these plans, as necessary, to their local partners and ensure that arrangements dovetail. Annex 5A indicates in a number of places the involvement of local, regional and national levels in the development of plans. Some of these relate to specific sectoral concerns, such as foot-and-mouth; others to generic capabilities which are required to support national plans for coping with catastrophic incidents.

See also: Box 5.9 on the UK Capabilities Programme.

<sup>42</sup> regulation 12

<sup>43</sup> regulation 22

<sup>44</sup> regulations 9–11

<sup>45</sup> regulation 8(a)

<sup>46</sup> regulation 8(b)

<sup>47</sup> s. 2(1)(d)

### Box 5.8: Day-to-day incident procedures

It is generally accepted as good practice that procedures which relate to events that fall short of an emergency should be removed from the core generic plan for emergencies, because they do not require a special mobilisation.

Day-to-day incident procedures are not covered by the Act. Nonetheless, they deserve particular attention, so as to give greater coherence to response arrangements. It is sometimes difficult for the emergency services, such as the police, when they arrive at the scene of an incident, to know who are the responsible individuals representing partner organisations with whom they should co-ordinate. When an organisation has several functions called into play by an incident, a number of officers representing key disciplines may be called to the scene. Integrated incident management with partner organisations is improved if procedures are in place for co-ordinating staff at the scene of a day-to-day incident (by, for example, appointing a Lead Incident Officer or a Liaison Officer).

Sound procedures developed and practised at the day-to-day incident level ensure there will be greater confidence when the event to be dealt with is an emergency. Emergency planners and the relevant managers need to examine day-to-day procedures, and, where necessary, revise them or bring them into a corporate framework. Day-to-day procedures need to link seamlessly into the emergency planning procedures.

**5.93** A multi-agency plan may be developed by:

- one or more of the Category 1 members of the LRF on behalf of all or some of its members across the whole LRF area. For example, a plan for an emergency mortuary;
- one or more of the Category 1 members of the LRF across the boundaries between two or more LRFs, particularly where there is a hazard which affects communities on both sides of a boundary, such as an airport; or
- one or more of the Category 1 responders directly on their own behalf, without relying on the LRF as such and not covering the whole LRF area. For example, a plan for a local shopping centre or entertainment complex or for a sports stadium.

**5.94** A multi-level plan is a further example of a multi-agency plan, involving different levels of government, such as the National Contingency Plan for Marine Pollution (see also Box 5.7).

**5.95** Where the boundaries of the LRF coincide with those of the organisation(s) initiating a multi-agency plan, it is not the LRF which is responsible for the plan. Each of the participating organisations takes direct responsibility for the plan.

### Plan content

**5.96** The definition of emergency in section 1 of the Act covers a wide range of events or situations threatening serious damage in the areas of human welfare, the environment and security.<sup>48</sup> These situations are listed in detail in Annex 4B which provides a classification of hazards and threats. But the number of generic capabilities and specific emergency plans which a responder body may choose to develop is not specified in the Act.

**5.97** Even so the Government considers that plans should have regard to two groupings of people, the vulnerable and survivors, in a wide range of situations. A further grouping, emergency responder personnel, is also indicated in this guidance as deserving special consideration.

### The vulnerable

**5.98** Vulnerable people are one set of people to whom all emergency plans must have regard. (The particular needs of the vulnerable are also considered in Chapter 7).

**5.99** Having regard to the vulnerable means that people who are less able to help themselves in the circumstances of an emergency must be given special

<sup>48</sup> s. 1(1)

consideration in plans. Frequently, a distinction is made between the self-reliant and the vulnerable. It is assumed generally that self-reliant people will be able to respond to the requirements of an emergency promptly, while the vulnerable are likely to require special assistance in taking appropriate actions.

**5.100** Sometimes the planning required of the Category 1 responder may be as simple as making arrangements to emphasise to the public that they should adopt a good-neighbourly attitude, keep an eye on vulnerable neighbours and offer help where needed.

**5.101** However, making direct contact is relatively easy when such people live or are present at vulnerable establishments, such as nursing homes, day centres or schools. It is harder when they live or are present in the community as individuals. In these cases, the local authority and the health authority are likely to have relevant lists – such as of people on dialysis machines in their homes. Subject to the provisions in the Data Protection Act, arrangements can be made in the plans of relevant Category 1 responders for access to these lists at the time of an emergency. Plans should refer to these information sources. Utility companies also hold similar but more limited lists on their “help registers”.<sup>49</sup>

**5.102** Special provision also needs to be made in plans for people with disabilities. This provision may include special transport, such as local authority social services or voluntary sector vehicles, or taxis, to help in the evacuation of people with mobility problems. Other provision may include plans for the availability of electric wheelchairs in town and shopping centres to facilitate evacuation when needed.

**5.103** It is not easy to define in advance and for planning purposes who are the vulnerable people to whom special consideration should be given in plans. Those who are vulnerable will vary depending on the nature of the emergency, for example people with breathing difficulties in face of toxic fumes. For planning purposes there are broadly three categories which should be considered:

- those who, for whatever reason, have mobility difficulties, including people with physical

disabilities or a medical condition and even pregnant women;

- those with mental health difficulties; and
- others who are dependent, such as children.

Further consideration of how best to communicate with those who are especially vulnerable in emergencies is contained in Chapter 7.

### Victims, including survivors, family and friends

**5.104** A second grouping of people to be given a place in plans are the victims of an emergency. These include not only those directly affected by the emergency, but also those who, as family and friends, suffer bereavement or the anxiety of not knowing what has happened. There is a full discussion of the particular information needs of these groups in Chapter 7.

**5.105** Planned procedures at the scene of an emergency – and at secondary centres like hospitals and the emergency mortuary – should pay particular attention to the needs of this grouping. Information planning should be designed to meet their needs. Recovery plans should contain commitments to respond sensitively to the needs of survivor groups – for example, to hold a review meeting within a short time to assess the need for longer-term initiatives – and, if necessary, to develop medium and long-term support programmes, as were adopted by Liverpool City Council following the Hillsborough stadium football disaster and in North Wales after the Towyn floods.

**5.106** Category 1 responders should consider developing a specific multi-agency plan for offering social and psychological support to survivors, the bereaved and the wider community following an emergency. Such a plan for a multi-agency crisis support team would be likely to include local social services, health authorities, police family liaison officers and voluntary organisations. As recommended by the inquiry into the Marchioness disaster,<sup>50</sup> a lead responder may be needed to co-ordinate the planning, which would generally be the local authority.

<sup>49</sup> While each situation must be assessed on its own facts, there are particular provisions in the Data Protection Act which will be relevant in this kind of situation, for example Schedule 2 which contains a list of conditions that must be satisfied before information is disclosed and deals with situations where disclosure of the information is necessary in order to protect the vital interests of the data subject

<sup>50</sup> Lord Justice Clark's Inquiry into the Marchioness Disaster, 2001

### Box 5.9: UK Capabilities Programme

The UK Capabilities Programme is a government programme. Its purpose is to deliver a number of generic capabilities to provide government with the assurance that effective response can be made at a national, devolved administration, regional or local level to a number of the most serious disruptive challenges.

The programme relies on the framework of the Act to provide a basic structure for civil protection and resilience at the local level. However, the expectations of the UK Capabilities Programme are a matter of government policy and not a requirement of the Act.

The UK Capabilities Programme lists workstreams concerned with the maintenance of essential services, for example:

- health;
- environment – water, food, sewerage, flood defence;
- transport;
- utilities; and
- financial services.

Other functional workstreams address potential consequences of a major disruptive challenge, for example:

- chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN);
- human infectious diseases;
- animal and plant infectious diseases;
- mass casualties;
- mass fatalities;
- mass evacuation;
- site clearance; and
- warning and Informing the public.

For more information on the programme, see:

<http://www.ukresilience.info/contingencies/capabilities.htm>

#### Responder personnel

**5.107** Sometimes plans prepared for emergencies place unrealistic expectations on management and personnel. The emergency services have health and safety procedures which determine shift patterns and check for levels of stress. They also have rules about exposing personnel to danger. It is important that all Category 1 responders should build proper consideration for the welfare of this third grouping, their own personnel, into all their plans.

#### Plan presentation and plan making

**5.108** Greater consistency in planning documents, and the terminology used, will ensure improved co-operation between responders at the local level. It will also lead to improved understanding at all levels and among the public.

**5.109** Some Category 1 responders will focus more on training and developing an effective management culture, with the emphasis on inculcating an awareness of management's role in responding effectively to emergencies, than on the production of written plans. All will rely on written plans, however, to a greater or lesser extent.

**5.110** An important consideration in writing an emergency plan is that it should introduce the reader to the topic by logical steps. It should also be as concise as possible. The table opposite provides an example of a standard format which may be followed. Other formats begin with "activation" because plans are response documents and activation is the most important element.

## Presentation of an emergency plan

Section	Content	In summary
<b>General information</b>	A short, overall description of the plan. Its purpose. Some reference to the risk assessment on which the plan is based (with more detail as necessary in an annex).	<b>Why</b> the plan is needed
<b>Management, control and co-ordination</b>	Control arrangements. The main elements of the plan in a hierarchy of importance. The main emergency teams, their roles and responsibilities. The key concepts, doctrine and terminology. The main facilities, locations and communications.	<b>How</b> the plan works <b>Who</b> has a role in the plan – (1) by title
<b>Activation, including alert and standby</b>	The procedures for alerting, placing on standby and then activating the key teams named in the Control and Co-ordination section. This includes the procedure for determining when an emergency has occurred.	<b>When</b> the plan is activated
<b>Action</b>	Specific actions to be undertaken, as their contribution to the overall response, by the key organisations, divisions, departments and officers in the hierarchy. Key officer checklists can be abstracted from here.	<b>What</b> the plan says will be done and by whom
<b>Annexes</b>	Call-out lists (related to the key teams). Resource lists. Further information, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more on the risk assessment, as necessary; and</li> <li>• a policy statement on carrying out training and exercises.</li> </ul>	<b>Who</b> has a role in the plan – (2) contact details

## The process of preparing plans

**5.111** It is important that planning should be seen as a collective process involving, at all stages, those who will be responsible for delivering the plan's objectives on the day of an emergency.

**5.112** The cycle of emergency planning shown in Figure 5.1 identifies (in the lower circle of the 'figure of eight') four phases in developing and maintaining plans. This section looks at the process of preparing plans in more detail. It suggests, in addition, that a specific project plan should be developed as part of the planning process, to ensure that the emergency plan is delivered on schedule and with all the necessary elements complete.

### Step 1: risk profile

**5.113** The first step carries the treatment of risks, that is, the final stage of the risk assessment process, over into the emergency planning process. Under the terms of the Act, risk treatment focuses on emergency planning only, and does not directly address other aspects. The aim is to define the situations or scenarios for which response capabilities

are needed, in accordance with the responder's functions. It is important to imagine and select from the risk profile all the possible circumstances. For example:

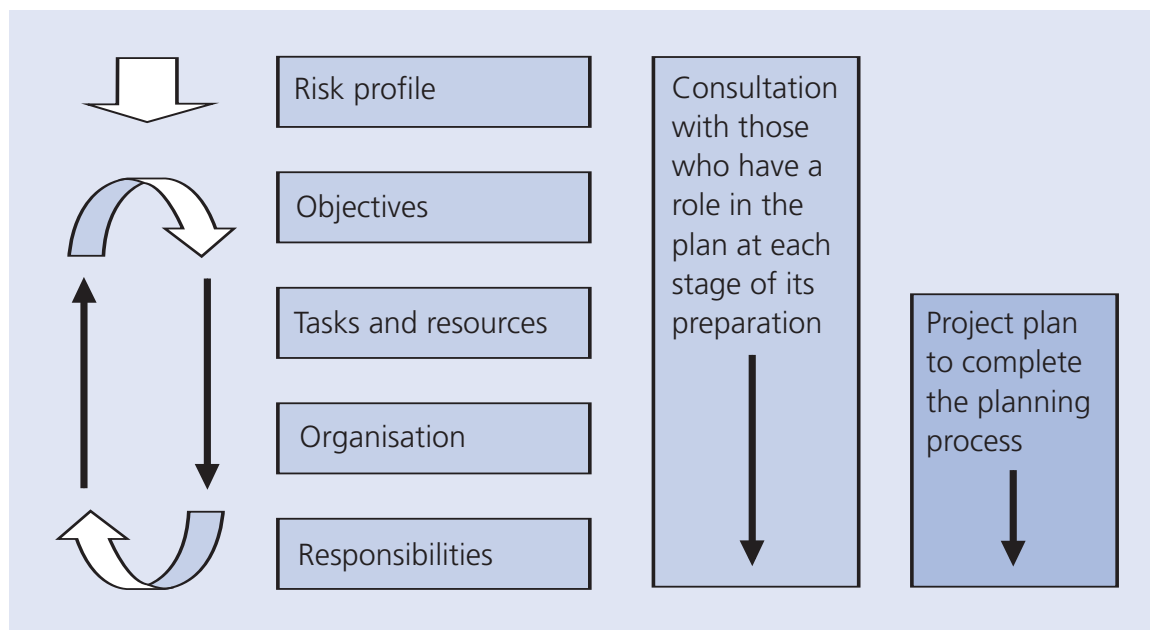
- What is most likely to happen?
- Who might be affected by the impact of the emergency? or
- What are the different things that might go wrong with the response?

**5.114** As a result of this stage, an overview is achieved of the scenarios which the plan is designed to address.

### Step 2: objectives, including capabilities

**5.115** The basic scenarios delivered by the risk assessment then need to be translated (or operationalised) into a series of objectives – including a first assessment of the capabilities needed to meet them. This is the most important stage of the entire plan-making process. Key operational officers at middle-management level need to be asked how they would expect to deal with relevant scenarios. They should be talked to individually, to try to get them to think honestly 'outside the box' about emergencies

Figure 5.2: The five steps for preparing an emergency plan



that are likely to test to its limits their professional experience and the competence of their organisation. They should be encouraged to take their time to think about all the issues:

- How would they go about it?
- What capabilities and resources have they got?
- What numbers of casualties should the plan be able to deal with?
- What are the priorities?
- What are the likely problems to be overcome? and
- What standard of response is required?

**5.116** At a certain point, the key professionals from various disciplines should be brought together to agree these objectives between themselves, and to confirm that all are thinking along the same lines in terms of an agreed set of planning assumptions and capabilities. As the questions are answered, so the objectives for the plan are clarified and if possible quantified.

**5.117** Once the objectives are agreed in terms of the need to develop capabilities, the scope and ambition of the plan are determined. The remaining steps are systematic to achieve a final scheme. Even so, as difficulties are encountered or new considerations emerge, the objectives themselves

may have to be refined or changed as part of the cycle of emergency planning.

**5.118** The next three steps are placed in the order in which the plan is thought through (not how they will appear in the written document).<sup>51</sup>

### Step 3: tasks and resources

**5.119** The logistics of the plan follow directly from determining its objectives. The function-based capabilities of the organisation should be determined, as should the risk-based capability that appears to be required (see also Box 5.4). The basic questions are:

- What are we going to have to do?
- How are we going to do it?
- Do we have the right teams, the right numbers, the right skills, the right training?
- Are the management and communication structures in place to do it? and
- Who might be called upon to reinforce the local capability? Are our resources of facilities, materials, vehicles, and equipment sufficient? If not, where do we get them from?

**5.120** These questions should be pursued with the key staff in each functional area. As a result of this

<sup>51</sup> For a suggested order for the written document, see the table on page 65

## Starting a project plan – two sets of planning objectives

At Step 3 of the process, what becomes absolutely vital is a project plan, a structured process for managing all the work that needs to be done to deliver a completed emergency plan, including a work programme and time line.

Two separate sets of planning objectives should be distinguished at this point:

- the objectives of the emergency plan itself – already established at Step 2; and
- the objectives of the project plan – namely, the actions that need to be finished, and the capabilities that need to be in place, before the emergency plan itself is completed.

Those organisations that wish to apply project management techniques across a wider range of their civil protection duties should look at the Office of Government Commerce website on Centres of Excellence, which recommends use of PRINCE2: <http://www.ogc.gov.uk>

stage in the process, a detailed list is created of all the many activities which will need to be undertaken successfully during an emergency.

### Step 4: organisation

**5.121** The large number of emergency tasks identified at Step 3 above needs to be pulled into a proper management framework for dealing with response. No useful purpose is served by reinventing satisfactory control and co-ordination arrangements which already exist. However, the following questions may be asked to ensure that the organisational framework is fit for purpose:

- What is the hierarchy of control needed to avoid duplication and ensure that everyone knows what to do?
- Can existing management structures within the organisation be utilised in an emergency setting effectively – or do new management structures need to be created specifically to deliver the capability required for an emergency?
- Does a joint structure need to be created across a number of responders to enable all the tasks to be properly managed in a coherent way – or does such a structure for emergencies already exist in a form that can be drawn upon in the face of the scenarios defined, and the objectives of the plan?
- Where does the authorisation lie for prompt expenditure decisions? and
- How will the different teams and groups identified above be organised so that they share a common understanding as to how they will operate?

### Step 5: responsibilities

**5.122** Finally, as the organisational framework of the plan is addressed, so the allocation of responsibilities across teams and responders can be firmed up. A detailed spelling out of who does what becomes possible. Responsibilities can be clearly assigned, with emergency objectives and tasks spelled out and an organisational framework agreed for pulling all the capabilities together.

**5.123** As these questions are answered, so the plan takes shape. Task lists can be prepared, allocated by responsibility. All the actions needed to meet all the plan's objectives will be allocated securely.

**5.124** The whole process is ongoing and should be reviewed as the plan develops and as circumstances change. For example, if there are insufficient resources available to deliver the plan's objectives – and it is not possible to obtain more – then the objectives must be revisited. Here again close attention should be paid to the requirement to perform the responder's functions "so far as necessary and desirable" in an emergency.<sup>52</sup>

**5.125** The key to an effective planning process is to be clear about its objectives. There should be buy-in to those objectives from all the responders and their key staff affected by the plan. This is one of the main reasons why simply writing the plan, getting it approved and issuing it to staff is not sufficient. A sound process for developing the plan is likely to involve regular consultation with key representatives

<sup>52</sup> See s. 2(1)(d) and Box 5.4

of all the teams to be mobilised by it, until the plan is finished. This ensures a degree of preliminary validation.

**5.126** However, it should be made absolutely clear that this suggested process for developing a plan is not the same as the way in which the plan is presented.<sup>53</sup>

**5.127** Once the final draft of the plan has been agreed and approved between all the parties, the relevant senior officers should sign off the plan.

## Maintaining and embedding the plans

**5.128** So far, the guidance has considered the lower circle in Figure 5.1, the cycle of emergency planning. The next sections move the process into the top half of the 'figure of eight' and examine how a completed plan is validated, maintained and quality-assured as a living document. In the real world, it will be exposed to emergencies. Managers will assess how far the principles and procedures contained help them in a real event. Partner organisations will also form their own views on the effectiveness of each organisation's plan, or its contribution to a multi-agency plan.

### Plan publication (internal)

**5.129** The publication and dissemination of an emergency plan for internal purposes (that is, for the organisations, teams and officers covered by the plan) is an important part of plan validation. A plan is not valid if it only exists in draft form.

**5.130** For a plan to be valid, it must be accepted as the stated policy of the organisation or Category 1 responders on whose behalf it has been produced. For this to happen, the key decision makers in an

organisation must have an awareness of the plan and, through sign-off and other initiatives, have accepted part ownership of it.

**5.131** Persons responsible for carrying out roles in the plan must be aware of those roles. Internal publication of the plan is often accompanied by awareness-raising events designed to promote the plan to those 'who need to know'.

**5.132** There should also be a general level of awareness throughout the Category 1 responder that the plan exists and that the Category 1 responder has a commitment to carry out its agreed responsibilities under the plan.

### Plan training

**5.133** The Regulations require provisions for the training of staff or other persons to be included in plans.<sup>54</sup> This is likely to go beyond much current practice, because it means that the plans themselves should include a schedule for training. This training should extend beyond those employed by the responder and include contractors and the staff of voluntary organisations who might be used in support of the plan.

**5.134** Training, as such, as distinct from exercises, is broadly about raising the awareness of the participants (who are those named in the plan or mobilised by it) about what the emergency is that they may face and giving them confidence in the procedures and their ability to carry them out successfully. It is particularly important that participants in training understand the objectives of the plan and their part in delivering them.

**5.135** It is also important that people taking part in exercises should be trained beforehand, so that they know what is expected of them.

## Completion of the project plan

The completion of the project plan ensures that all the objectives of the emergency plan are supported by firm arrangements, adequate resources and facilities, an agreed allocation of responsibilities, and so on.

Of course, the plan still needs to be validated.

<sup>53</sup> See paragraphs 5.108–5.110 above

<sup>54</sup> regulation 25(b)

**5.136** Training may address the specific skills needed to perform roles under the plan. Generally, however, plans should aim to place individuals in positions where, in an emergency, they carry out tasks they are used to performing in their normal work.

### General raising of awareness

**5.137** There are also many ways by which an organisation can raise awareness internally of the existence of an emergency plan and its contents. These include:

- ensuring that emergency planning arrangements are part of induction training for all relevant staff;
- putting the plans on the intranet;
- producing information leaflets for personnel;
- publishing an informal newsletter; and
- holding an awareness-raising seminar.

### Plan exercising

**5.138** Regulations require that plans include provisions for carrying out exercises.<sup>55</sup> This is perhaps a step beyond much current planning practice. It means that the plan itself must include reference to an exercise programme, which will maintain its currency and validity.

**5.139** When developing an exercise programme across a number of plans and over a period of time it may be helpful to focus on:

- a) all aspects of the main generic plan;
- b) plans which address the most probable risks and are most likely to be used;
- c) those divisions, departments or teams which are weakest;
- d) those plans or parts of plans where the least training and exercising has been done; and
- e) co-ordination with the exercise programmes of other key partners.

**5.140** People writing and delivering exercises and training should be suitably experienced or qualified.

**5.141** In many local areas, it is accepted that the combined response is strengthened if responders are aware of each other's exercises and are invited, where appropriate, to play a part in them. Multi-agency exercise and training programmes can be publicised through the Local Resilience Forum.

### The role of Category 2 responders in exercises

**5.142** The requirements of the Regulations in regard to exercising apply to Category 1 responders, but Category 2 responders are obliged to co-operate with them in the delivery of their civil protection duties. In seeking co-operation from Category 2 responders in their exercise programmes, Category 1 responders should ensure that their requests are reasonable and do not overburden them.

### The purpose of exercises

**5.143** Generally, participants in exercises should have an awareness of their roles and be reasonably comfortable with them, before they are subject to the stresses of an exercise. Exercising is not to catch people out. It tests procedures, not people. If staff are underprepared, they may blame the plan, when they should blame their lack of preparation and training. An important aim of an exercise should be to make people feel more comfortable in their roles and to build morale.

**5.144** Exercises have three main purposes:

- to validate plans (**validation**);
- to develop staff competencies and give them practice in carrying out their roles in the plans (**training**); and
- to test well-established procedures (**testing**).

Most exercises will have some elements of all three.

### Plan testing

**5.145** Not all aspects of an emergency plan can be tested, but some crucial elements can, such as:

- the contact list;
- the activation process;
- communications equipment;
- the setting-up procedures; and
- information management.

The purpose of this type of exercise may be to test how well the arrangements are working or to demonstrate their effectiveness.

**5.146** Ringing the relevant numbers on a regular basis (some responders do this every three months) can test the contact details of each person named in the plan.

<sup>55</sup> regulation 25(a)

**5.147** The activation process can be examined by running a short test, in which the staff responsible for triggering a plan activation are physically asked to do so. This should be done at least annually.

**5.148** Communications equipment needs to be tested for reliability, capacity and reach, that is, the conditions where it is effective and where it begins to fail. Personnel who are not involved habitually, for example, with a particular radio system or channel, also need to be tested regularly.

**5.149** The setting-up procedures for control centres and other key facilities should be tested at least annually. This includes provision of necessary emergency supplies and equipment (for example, any IT equipment, stationery, message forms, log books, whiteboards, financial record forms, etc) and ensuring that they can be located quickly and placed in the right positions where they are needed. This can be done as one starting point for a larger exercise.

**5.150** There are considerable overlaps between plan testing of this sort and exercising for business continuity planning (see Chapter 6).

### Exercise design

**5.151** The design of an exercise should be driven by its objectives. There will be:

- overall objectives for the exercise set by the exercise directing staff;
- specific objectives for each of the main players (who may, for example, want to examine their ability to contact officers and mobilise resources in real time); and
- potentially, in a multi-agency exercise, several sets of objectives. There will be a core overall set, and each organisation may have its own. Any conflicts in objectives should be ironed out early in the design process.

**5.152** Once the objectives are meshed into a single design, everything in the exercise should be determined by them. The scenario is simply a means of setting up situations which test the exercise objectives. It is important that the scenario should be realistic, so that people do not think their time is being wasted, and it should have enough in it to provide a challenge. However, the details of the

scenario can sometimes take up too much time in exercise preparation.

### Exercise types

**5.153** There are three main types of exercise:

- discussion-based;
- table top; and
- live.

(A fourth category combines elements of the other three.) The choice of which one to adopt depends on what the purpose of the exercise is. It is also a question of lead-in time and available resources.<sup>56</sup>

**5.154** A discussion-based exercise is cheapest to run and easiest to prepare. It can be used at the policy-formulation stage as a 'talk-through' of how to finalise the plan. More often, it is based on a completed plan and is used to develop awareness about the plan through discussion. In this respect, it is often used for training purposes.

**5.155** A table-top exercise is based on simulation, not necessarily literally around a table top. Usually, it involves a realistic scenario and a time line, which may be real time or may speed time up. Usually table tops are run in a single room, or in a series of linked rooms which simulate the divisions between responders who need to communicate and be co-ordinated. The players are expected to know the plan and they are invited to test how the plan works as the scenario unfolds. This type of exercise is particularly useful for validation purposes, particularly for exploring weaknesses in procedures. Table-top exercises are relatively cheap to run, except in the use of staff time. They demand careful preparation.

**5.156** A live exercise is a live rehearsal for implementing the plan. Such exercises are particularly useful for testing logistics, communications and physical capabilities. They also make excellent training events from the point of view of experiential learning, helping participants develop confidence in their skills and providing experience of what it would be like to use the plan's procedures in a real event. Where the latter purposes are, in fact, the main objective of the exercise, then it is essentially a training exercise or practice drill. Live exercises are expensive to set up on the day and demand the most extensive preparation.

<sup>56</sup> For a slightly different presentation, see also *The Exercise Planner's Guide*, Home Office, 1998

**5.157** The three types of exercise can be used for single- or multi-agency plans and multi-level plans.

### Preparations for an exercise

**5.158** During the planning stage for an exercise, it is important to bring in any necessary expertise to the working group. Members of this group should not be players in the exercise and must keep all information confidential. The membership of the planning group will become the exercise-directing team and numbers should be kept relatively small. Wider planning meetings, with attendees from all organisations taking part, can also be used as part of the exercise planning process.

**5.159** Initial planning meetings should include discussion of the following:

- objective-setting and agreement – these may change in the light of later decisions;
- scope of exercise – will it cover the first few hours or weeks? will it cover all responders or only some? – determined by the objectives;
- the scenario – get an expert (in-house, if possible) to help on this;
- identify the teams and organisations that will be playing;
- determine who or how many will play from each organisation;
- what type and structure of exercise is suitable – again depending on the objectives;
- what accommodation or locations are needed;
- whether players will bring their communications equipment, or be provided with phones, or whether paper and runners are sufficient; and
- what the name of the exercise is.

### Exercise documentation

**5.160** A large amount of documentation is likely to be needed by the exercise-directing team. Most of this will be confidential:

- aims and objectives of the exercise;
- storyline: an overview of everything that will happen in the exercise (similar to the stage director's notes alongside the text of a theatrical play);
- structure and methodology;
- text of the initial briefings (for players, observers, umpires);
- basic scenario (to be given to players at the start);

- overall scenario as it develops over time (for the exercise-directing team);
- checklist of key points (for the exercise-directing team – to enable them to note during the play whether the exercise objectives have been met);
- scene-setting information (for the players, to be sent out in advance);
- specific injects or feeds (issued to the players as the scenario unfolds); and
- evaluation forms (to be given to the players at the end of the exercise).

**5.161** Generally, the exercise should be ended by the directing staff when they consider that the bulk of the exercise objectives (whether they are for plan validation, training or testing) have been met.

### Debrief and evaluation

**5.162** Frequently, the players – who as far as possible should be the individuals and teams likely to be mobilised in the event of a real emergency – are the best judges of whether the procedures 'work' or not. In a plan validation exercise, the main purpose is, therefore, to provide players with the opportunity to carry out the procedures and to offer their comments on whether they are sound or might be improved.

**5.163** The conduct by the exercise director of the 'hot' debrief immediately after the event – and obtaining written assessments later from the key players taking part – deserves pre-planning as much as the exercise itself, so as to get the maximum benefit from what is a time-consuming and costly event. Comments may also be sought from expert observers.

**5.164** Written assessments are useful for the formal debrief some time after the exercise (which may be a single- or multi-agency event) when considered judgements about the lessons learned are offered – and also as source material for the exercise report.

**5.165** Frequently, in the debrief, exercise 'players' find it difficult to distinguish between:

- problems they have encountered with the realism and design of the exercise itself (**exercise mechanics**); and
- what the exercise has told them about the effectiveness of the plan in delivering its objectives (**plan validation**) or taught them in

terms of improved awareness, confidence and competencies (**training**).

The exercise director, when running a hot debrief afterwards, should always provide a short, separate slot for players to comment on the exercise mechanics. However, the two evaluations should be kept separate, so as to avoid confusion and time-wasting during the crucial plan validation discussion.

### Lessons learned

**5.166** A post-exercise report should include recommendations for improvement in the plan in question. Preparation of the exercise report draws on the debrief and on written comments from the key players.

**5.167** Within 12 months of the exercise, an implementation report should be produced, indicating which of the exercise report's recommendations have been carried out in the form of revisions to procedures in the plans.

**5.168** Lessons learned from multi-agency exercises should be publicised through the Local Resilience Forum.

### Generation of further exercises

**5.169** Where an exercise of whatever type (plan validation, training or testing) indicates that there are problems with the procedures or their execution, further simulations may be held to train in, or examine, specific aspects of the plan. Perhaps the call-out procedures or the message-recording system need testing further. It is not then necessary to hold a comprehensive exercise. The particular procedure causing difficulties may be isolated and tested, or practised, again and again until it is right.

### Plan maintenance procedures and revision

**5.170** Plans should be revised if a new risk assessment indicates that the plan is out of date, or a new risk is identified.<sup>57</sup>

**5.171** Other factors which may require the revision of plans include:

- **Lessons learned from experience of emergencies:** These might effectively draw attention to new risks not previously identified, or they may demonstrate that better procedures are needed, or that organisations not previously involved need to be brought into the plans.
- **Lessons learned from exercises:** The lessons learned from exercises are likely to be similar to those from real events; the difference is that exercises are controlled events, specifically designed to test procedures and they can be repeated again and again until sound arrangements are in place.
- **Restructuring and other changes in organisations, their procedures and technical systems identified in the plans:** Plans must be adjusted regularly to reflect organisational changes, including restructurings, changed methods of delivery of functions, redefinitions of an organisation's mission and of its role in emergencies, new policies and protocols, and changes in technology and facilities, such as communications equipment or control centres.
- **Changes in key personnel:** Plans – or their supporting annexes<sup>58</sup> – must continually reflect changes in the details of key personnel, including names, job titles and contact arrangements.

**5.172** It is good practice to follow a standard cycle for the revision and reissue of those plans which are in hard copy, as follows:

- issuing of corrections to contact details in plans every three months;<sup>59</sup>
- review of all plans periodically;
- issuing of revised or new plans as soon as practicable; and
- where all plans are contained within a single volume or handbook, its comprehensive reissue in a new edition (perhaps once every one to two years).

**5.173** Where plans are maintained and circulated electronically, corrections and changes can, of course, be made as they occur. But the same regular cycle of plan maintenance activities (as outlined above) should

<sup>57</sup> s. 2(1)(e)

<sup>58</sup> Many plan writers exclude contact details as far as possible from the planning document and include them in a separate annex for ease of revision

<sup>59</sup> This procedure does not, of course, require a reissue of the plan itself. Corrections can be inserted directly into web-based versions of the plan or circulated by letter for insertion by the plan copy-holder in hard copy. To make this regular updating task manageable, the onus should lie on key staff and departments named in the plans to inform the plan manager of corrections and other changes to contact details

be sustained as part of a comprehensive emergency plan review programme. Major revisions should be advertised by a 'publication' announcement to the key personnel, divisions and departments affected. Up-to-date versions of electronic plans should also be kept in hard copy in case of IT failure.

**5.174** Plan maintenance requires systematic procedures for:

- recording and amending details of personnel, job titles or ranks, departmental or divisional names, headquarters and contact points of organisations, and so on;
- ensuring version control, so that the dates of all amendments of whatever size and extent are clearly identified on each page;
- reviewing plan objectives and standards, roles, policies, frameworks;
- holding training events, recording who has been trained and how often;
- holding exercises to validate plans, recording lessons learned, and ensuring that lessons learned are acted upon in terms of amendments to plans;
- maintaining a cycle of exercises to validate plans and ensure preparedness of staff;
- recording who has attended exercises;
- noting lessons learned from emergencies and other incidents, and taking action on them;
- publishing and circulating plans, ensuring that they reach the people who should have them, maintaining records of those who hold them, testing that those who hold them have read them and know what they mean for their role;
- delivering regular awareness sessions for senior officers, key partners, elected members and so on;
- liaising with all partners continually and consistently to maintain awareness and ensure the continued relevance of the plans as organisations change; and
- keeping track of developments nationally and locally.

**5.175** For an example of a plan maintenance matrix see Annex 5D.