

DEALING WITH DISASTERS TOGETHER

CONTENTS

Foreword

1. Introduction

2. The Co-ordinated Response

Integrated Emergency Management
Agencies providing or contributing to the local response
Objectives of a co-ordinated response
The response to a disaster at a single site
Senior management arrangements
Handling widespread disasters
Debriefing, inquiries and lessons emerging

3. Principles of Command and Control

Introduction
Operational Level
Tactical Level
Strategic Level
The Strategic Co-ordinating Group

4. The Care and Treatment of Disaster Victims

Locating survivors
Care of survivors
The injured
Fatalities
Casualty Bureau
Friends and relatives
Evacuation
Social and psychological support
Religious and cultural needs
Disaster Appeals

5. Information and the Media

Introduction
Assisting the media
Initial actions
A media response organisation
Media centre

Transfer of the media operation to local or health authority control
Remote handling
Liaison with central government
Information to the public
Visits by VIPs
Sustaining the response

6. Information and Advice to the Public

Information and advice needs
Ways of meeting the needs
Level and nature of consideration required
Accuracy of information and advice

7. The Voluntary Sector

Introduction
Planning the voluntary sector's contribution
Training and exercising

8. Central Government and Lead Departments

The lead department concept
The role of the lead department
The Scottish Executive
Scottish Emergency Co-ordinating Committee

9. The Co-ordinated Approach to Planning, Training and Exercising

Introduction
A co-ordinated approach to preparedness
Planning
Joint training and exercising

Bibliography

Guidance
Legislation

FOREWORD

Disasters usually strike suddenly and unexpectedly. Many agencies have a part in dealing with the disaster and its aftermath, and the effectiveness of the total response will depend on how well the emergency services, local authorities and central government have harmonized their preparations.

The guidance in this document is not in any way meant to be prescriptive, nor does it replace existing guidance for the individual emergency services. The key message which it brings across is the need for all who are involved with the response to any disaster to be associated with planning that response. In this way those who are caught up in the trauma of the incident can be assured that their needs will be met in the most timely and effective manner.

The Scottish Executive has for some years now encouraged those involved in local authority emergency planning to develop and expand their horizons through the adoption of 'Integrated Emergency Management'. The philosophy of IEM is covered later in this publication.

We have been pleased to work closely together with local authorities and emergency services in developing the concept - it is not something which was 'handed down' by Central Government.

The local authority emergency planning officers in Scotland have in the past made a significant contribution to emergency preparedness here and will continue to do so. The best possible use should be made of them, both by councils in relation to their own corporate structure and, in their advisory capacity, by the many other agencies who may be involved in planning for or responding to a disaster.

This guidance was originally prepared as a personal reference document for local authority Chief Executives. Its wider use and popularity, however, has led to the issue of this second edition which, in response to requests received, includes a new chapter on the Principles of Command and Control.

Much of the text in this guidance has been drawn from a Home Office publication entitled "Dealing with Disasters" and we again express our gratitude to the Home Office for allowing its reproduction.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This guidance is designed to show any who might be involved in contingency planning for or response to disasters how they can fit into the overall response. It is not intended to be prescriptive and it supplements, and does not replace the existing 'single-service' guidance on disaster preparedness and response which many organisations have prepared.

1.2 No single organisational arrangement will be appropriate to each and every disaster, nor will a single organisational blueprint for planning meet every need. The key to an effective response is to apply sound basic principles to the problem in hand.

1.3 A disaster is commonly understood by the general public as a great misfortune or calamity. In the context of emergency planning a useful working definition of a disaster is any event (happening with or without warning) causing or threatening death or injury, damage to property or the environment, or disruption to the community, which because of the scale of its effects cannot be dealt with by the emergency services and local authorities as part of their normal day-to-day activities.

1.4 While the causes of disaster may be sudden and unpredictable, certain kinds of industrial activity carry known risks and are subject to legal requirements for emergency planning. These include known chemical or nuclear hazards at fixed locations, where the most probable types of incident and their likely consequences are largely foreseeable. For this reason it is possible to prepare in advance for the appropriate action to be taken. Preparation reduces the likelihood of errors resulting from decisions being taken under crisis conditions. The response to emergencies where statutory requirements are relevant is not addressed in detail in this publication.

1.5 Disasters have a variety of effects on society and the environment. Thus they demand an integrated response, linking the expertise and resources of the emergency services and the local authorities, supplemented as appropriate by other services and organisations. There is no single agency within the UK which has all the skills and resources which may be needed. Moreover, a Government review concluded that the disaster response would not be helped by the creation of anything in the nature of a national disaster squad: prime responsibility for handling disasters should remain at the local level where the resources and expertise are to be found.

1.6 However, specialist advice and expertise is available centrally both at central government level and within the emergency services which may be called upon in support of the local level response. In Scotland The Scottish Executive Justice Department has a pivotal role in ensuring the quality of preparedness for disaster at the local level and across The Scottish Executive.

2. THE CO-ORDINATED RESPONSE

Integrated Emergency Management

2.1 The basis of emergency planning and response is now known as 'Integrated Emergency Management'. Under the principles of integrated emergency management the response to an emergency should concentrate on the effects rather than the cause of the disaster and, wherever possible, should be planned and undertaken as an extension of normal day to day activities. The underlying aim of the planning process should be to develop flexible arrangements which will enable agencies to deal with any crisis, whether foreseen or unforeseen.

2.2 Integration in emergency management must be applied at every stage if it is to be fully effective, although the practical arrangements at each stage may vary. The main stages usually identified are as follows:

- Prevention. This phase encompasses measures which are adopted in advance of an emergency and which seek to prevent it occurring or to reduce its severity.
- Preparedness. This is "the insurance policy" consisting of preparation to respond to known hazards and risks as well as to unforeseen events. Planning can be underpinned by training and exercises.
- Response. The initial response is normally provided by the statutory emergency services supported as necessary by the appropriate local authorities, public and private agencies and voluntary organisations. The basic objectives of the response, which will vary according to the circumstances of the event, will be to preserve life, property and the environment; to reduce to a minimum the harmful effects of the event, to prevent its escalation; and to facilitate criminal investigations and other inquiries; all without prejudicing as rapid as possible a return to normal life.
- Recovery. This encompasses those activities necessary to provide a rapid return to normality both for the community and for those supporting and serving it.

2.3 As regards response to disaster, there is no one model; the response will need to vary just as the nature and effects of the disaster will vary. Nevertheless, any response has to be an integrated operation, and certain other features will be common in the response to many disasters. Some key features addressed in this chapter are:

- The core of the initial response will normally be provided by the emergency services supported by the appropriate local authority or authorities, public and private agencies and voluntary organisations.
- The basic objectives of the integrated response will be similar on each occasion.
- The same basic management structure will be applicable.

- There will be a need to ensure that essential records are kept for debriefings, formal inquiries and disseminating information about the lessons learnt.

Agencies providing or contributing to the local response

2.4 The initial response to a disaster is usually provided by the emergency services. They can provide a rapid response and alert local authorities and other services as soon as possible. All organisations which need to respond quickly to a disaster should have arrangements that can be activated at short notice. These arrangements should be clearly established and promulgated.

2.5 Single service guidance documents have already been produced by or for a number of services. This chapter draws on them to offer guidance on how the procedures and operations of each of the organisations involved can be integrated to provide an efficient and effective response to disaster.

2.6 Each service or agency responding to a disaster has its own role and functions as follows.

The Police Service

The police co-ordinate the activities of all those responding at and around the scene (except insofar as the fire service has such responsibility within the 'inner cordon' - see below). Unless a disaster has been caused by severe weather or other natural phenomenon, the area concerned must be treated as the scene of a crime and preserved accordingly. The police oversee any criminal investigation. They also facilitate inquiries carried out by the responsible accident investigation body, such as the Health and Safety Executive, Railway Inspectorate or the Air or Marine Accident Investigation Branch. The police process casualty information and have responsibility for identifying and arranging for the removal of the dead. In this task they act on behalf of the Procurator Fiscal who has the legal responsibility for investigating the cause and circumstances of deaths arising from a disaster.

The Fire Service

The concerns of the fire service are the saving of life in conjunction with other emergency services, the rescue of trapped casualties, tackling fire and, as necessary, released chemicals or other hazards, and assisting the police and ambulance services with casualty handling and recovery of bodies. The fire service is also normally best placed to advise on the safety of personnel of all agencies involved within the inner cordon (see paragraph 2.13); and it will gather information on chemical hazards via the UK databases 'Chemdata' and 'Chemnet'.

NHS

The ambulance service provides the first NHS response at the scene. Immediate care for the injured and their evacuation to hospital are its tasks together with the mobilisation of further NHS resources required at the scene. These will include a Medical Incident Officer and such other doctors, nurses and equipment as the situation demands. Overall co-ordination of NHS activity, whether at the scene, in hospitals or elsewhere in the community to meet healthcare needs arising from the emergency is the responsibility of the Health Board.

HM Coastguard

HM Coastguard Agency comprises two main elements: HM Coastguard and the Marine Pollution Unit. The primary responsibility of HM Coastguard is to initiate and co-ordinate civil maritime search and rescue. This includes mobilising, organising and dispatching resources to assist people in distress at sea or in danger on the cliffs or shoreline. The Marine Pollution Unit is responsible for dealing with pollution at sea and for co-ordinating the shoreline clean-up.

Local Authorities

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster the principal concerns of local authorities include support for the emergency services, support and care for the local and wider community, use of resources to mitigate the effects of the emergency and co-ordination of the response by organisations other than the emergency services. As time goes on, and the emphasis switches to recovery, the local authority will take a leading role in rehabilitating the community and restoring the environment.

Industry/Commercial Organisations and Utilities

It should be remembered that industrial or commercial organisations, and the utilities, may play a direct part in the response to disaster if their personnel, operations or services have been involved. Other industries or commercial organisations may provide support through local partnerships in which, for example, they provide equipment, services or specialist knowledge.

The Community

The community can contribute to a wide range of activities, either as members of a voluntary organisation or as individuals. The valuable part which volunteers can play is addressed in Chapter 7.

Military

Military assistance may be used in support of local response. This has been an important part of many disaster responses in the past. Resources and skills which may be available and methods of requesting military assistance are set out in "Military Aid to the Civil

Community: A Pamphlet for the Guidance of Civil Authorities and Organisations". (Ministry of Defence 1989, third edition: AC 60421.)

The armed services also have a specific role to play in Post Crash Management (PCM) at aircrash sites, involving both military and civilian aircraft. In the event of any aircrash the police will liaise with the relevant RAF station, depending on where the incident has occurred.

Central Government

Central government has a role in providing advice or support to the local agencies and has to keep Ministers and Parliament informed of progress. The role of central government is discussed in Chapter 8.

Objectives of a Co-ordinated Response

2.7 The roles and responsibilities of the organisations/agencies described have to be set in the context of the objectives of the disaster response. All services and agencies responding to a disaster should be working - notwithstanding their particular responsibilities - to these common objectives. They are:

- To preserve life, property, and the environment.
- To reduce to a minimum the harmful effects of an emergency and prevent its escalation.
- To facilitate criminal investigations and judicial, public, technical or other inquiries.
- To bring about a swift return to normal life.
- Simultaneously to maintain normal services at an appropriate level.

The Response to a Disaster at a Single Site

2.8 Within the UK there is ample experience of disasters occurring within the bounds of relatively small areas. Many of the principles which emerge can also be applied to more widespread disasters.

2.9 The scene immediately after disaster has struck is likely to be confused. To bring some order to this confusion it is important that the emergency services establish control over the immediate area and co-ordinate the contributions to the response. Experience has shown that an effective response depends on good communications and mutual understanding.

2.10 It is generally accepted that the first member of the emergency services to arrive on the scene should not immediately become involved with rescue but should make a rapid assessment of the disaster and report to that service's control. Such information as is

immediately available should be provided about the nature of the disaster and its location; the number of dead, injured and uninjured; hazards actual and potential; access to the site and possible rendezvous points; and which emergency services are present or required. Additionally, each of the emergency services has its own requirements: for example, in the case of the fire service, the number of appliances and personnel likely to be needed.

2.11 The emergency services control which receives the initial message should immediately, and in accordance with established plans, alert the other emergency service control rooms, the local authorities and (where appropriate) the commercial, industrial or other organisation(s) involved.

2.12 At the scene it is vital that the emergency services establish control and co-ordination arrangements at the earliest stage. Each service needs to establish its own control arrangements but continuing liaison between the various controls throughout the response is essential. The underlying principle is that the police assume the role of overall co-ordination, thus enabling the other services to concentrate on their specific tasks. A pre-arranged co-ordinated management scheme for agencies involved in responding to a disaster will ensure that resources are used to best effect and will avoid situations where, for example, resources may be called upon simultaneously by different agencies. This is particularly the case with incidents that occur near or across administrative boundaries.

2.13 Arrangements which may have to be made at the scene of disasters include:

- setting up an inner cordon to secure the immediate scene and provide a measure of protection for personnel working within the area. All those entering the inner cordon must report to the relevant Control Post. This ensures that they can be safely accounted for should there be any escalation of the incident and affords opportunity for briefing about other issues which they need to be aware of. Persons leaving the cordon must also register their departure.
- assigning the control of specific functions to one of the emergency services or other agency, taking account of the circumstances of the disaster, the professional expertise of the emergency services and other agencies and any statutory obligations.
- the location of a rendezvous point or points for the emergency services, and non-emergency services personnel.
- the location of internal traffic routes for the emergency services and other vehicles (including a one-way system where appropriate) and the location of a marshalling area.
- the location of a collection point for survivors before they are taken to a survivor reception centre; the location of a casualty clearing station to which the injured can be taken; and an ambulance loading point for those who need to be taken to hospital.
- the location of a body holding area and temporary mortuary; and

- the location of a media liaison point.

2.14 The possible need for evacuation may also have to be addressed at a very early stage. Chapter 4 deals with this in more detail.

2.15 Where the response is prolonged or complex each service may establish management arrangements at the site to oversee the control and co-ordination of its response, often from specially designed vehicles equipped with suitable communications. Figure 1 opposite shows an example of a typical forward organisation with its supporting arrangements.

2.16 Liaison in the establishment of incident controls is vital. The location of each emergency service's incident control will depend on individual circumstances but they will normally be in the vicinity of the disaster site. Experience of previous disasters has shown that matters are far better co-ordinated if the incident controls are located close together.

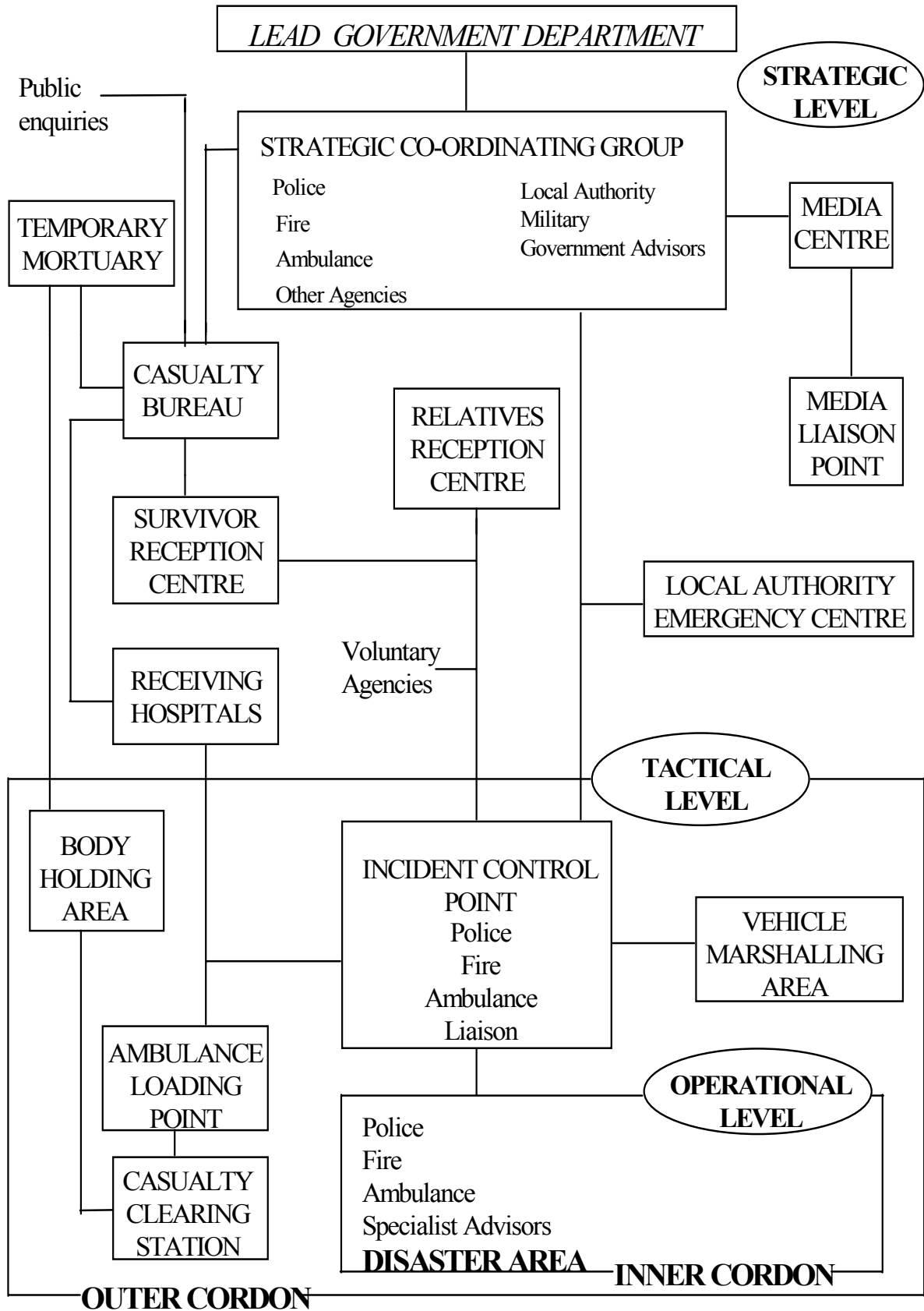
2.17 Two other issues may need to be addressed as soon as the situation permits. First, if practical, an outer cordon may have to be established around the scene of the disaster to control access to the whole of the disaster site. Secondly, emergency flying restrictions may be required. Dwindraught and noise from helicopters can disrupt rescue and fire-fighting operations, cause hazards to fire-fighters and rescuers, damage property and destroy evidence. Moreover, the presence of unauthorised aircraft poses collision hazards to police and rescue helicopters operating in the area. It may therefore be necessary to regulate flights in the vicinity of the disaster and the National Air Traffic Services (NATS) Instructions for Establishing Emergency Flying Restrictions within the United Kingdom 1989 describe how these restrictions are imposed. Liaison with the Civil Aviation Authority will normally be through the police.

2.18 Arrangements should also be in place for calling to the scene liaison officers from other organisations which may need to contribute to the disaster response, for example, HM Coastguard, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), the utilities or industrial or commercial concerns. It may also be appropriate for emergency service representatives to be present within the local authority operational centre. All liaison officers at the scene should be clearly identifiable and equipped with their own communications so that they can remain in contact with their own organisation to ensure that further support can be rapidly provided as necessary.

2.19 Where local authority and other supporting services might be required at short notice, resources should be mustered off-site so that they stand ready for immediate action if called upon by the emergency services.

2.20 If the disaster occurs within the perimeter of an industrial or commercial premises or, say, an airport or harbour, it is advisable to appoint a site incident officer from the affected organisation to ease access to facilities within the establishment and act as a link to the establishment's senior management and emergency management structure.

Figure 1 Example of a typical organisation for dealing with disaster



Senior Management Arrangements

2.21 Disasters can place considerable demands on the resources of the organisations called upon to respond, with consequent disruption to day to day activities. They may have long term implications that require attention by senior management and, in local authorities, by elected members. The issues which arise will undoubtedly affect more than one organisation and experience has shown that such issues can best be addressed by establishing a co-ordinated approach at senior management level as well as at the scene.

2.22 The purpose of the corporate approach at senior level is essentially to take strategic decisions in relation to the disaster response (see Chapter 3). Typical issues which may need to be addressed include the adequacy of resources for dealing with the disaster and support for those working at the scene; information to the public; care of those dealing with or affected by the disaster, including the relatives and friends of victims; longer term implications for the community or the environment; relations with the media; visits by VIPs; and contacts with central government. It is crucial that the arrangements for strategic level co-ordination should be supported by an appropriate physical infrastructure. An off-site response centre in an appropriate control room within local authority premises, established from the onset of the emergency, has been found to be a helpful arrangement. It can also facilitate the eventual handover of lead responsibility from the police and, as applicable, other emergency services to the Chief Executive.

Handling Widespread Disasters

2.23 Historically the UK has been more fortunate than some other countries, suffering less than they do from frequent or large-scale natural disasters such as storms, flooding or earthquakes. There is sufficient experience, however, to highlight some characteristics of the response to widespread disaster.

2.24 As for more localised emergencies, it will be helpful to prepare in advance arrangements for responding to the complexities of a widespread disaster and to design such arrangements to be, so far as possible, both flexible and consistent across a range of potential emergencies. It should be recognised that the disaster may well overwhelm local resources, disrupt telecommunications and block the usual access routes. However, self-help is likely and an organised response may well also start at a local level. In all cases the response would probably be supported by the local community and its voluntary organisations.

2.25 It may be some hours before the scale and extent of a widespread disaster can be fully established and the response and recovery plans activated. The precise arrangements, including which organisation should take the lead, will be determined by the nature of the disaster and its geographic extent. Co-ordination may take place on several levels, from the local to the national.

2.26 Resources will almost certainly be stretched by a widespread disaster. The authorities may have to call on the resources which industry and the armed forces can provide. Such responses can be mobilised more quickly if plans have been made in advance which address

their availability and means of obtaining them. The role of central government in these and other circumstances is addressed in Chapter 8.

Debriefing, Inquiries and Lessons Emerging

2.27 In order to facilitate debriefing and to provide evidence for inquiries (whether judicial, public, technical or of some other format), it is essential that a comprehensive record is kept of all events, decisions and actions taken. Each organisation should maintain its own records. It is important that someone is appointed to oversee the keeping and storage of the records and files in existence both before the disaster and created during the response.

2.28 Chief Officers and Chief Executives should consider instituting a formal debriefing system on both a single- and multi-agency basis. Experience has shown that video recordings can be useful for these purposes.

2.29 Chief Officers and Chief Executives will also wish to ensure that there is appropriate follow-up to any lessons which emerge from the de-briefing process. Appropriate follow-up will depend upon the circumstances but might include revision of plans and procedures, strengthening of liaison with other agencies, devising small exercises to test alternative approaches, and so forth.

3. COMMAND, CONTROL AND CO-ORDINATION

Introduction

3.1 In order to achieve a combined and co-ordinated response to a major incident the capabilities of the emergency services must be closely linked with those of local authorities and other agencies. A national structure has been agreed and adopted which ensures that all parties involved understand their role in the combined response and how the differing levels of management arrangements inter-relate.

3.2 The management framework which has been established embodies the same principles irrespective of the cause or nature of the incident, but remains flexible to individual circumstances. This framework

- (a) Allows each agency to tailor its own response plans to interface with the plans of others.
- (b) Ensures all parties involved understand their role in the combined response.
- (c) Explains how the differing levels of management arrangements relate to each other.
- (d) Retains flexibility of option to suit local circumstances.

3.3 The management of the response can be divided into 3 levels -*Operational, Tactical* and *Strategic*. The requirement to implement one or more of these management levels will be very dependent on the nature of the incident, but normally incidents will be handled at the *Operational* level and only moving on to the *Tactical* and finally the *Strategic* level should this prove necessary.

3.4 In its planning, each agency will need to recognise the 3 management levels - *Operational, Tactical and Strategic* - and the corresponding functions to be undertaken. This will allow the integration of management processes across agency boundaries. It is not intended that the management levels necessarily predetermine the rank or seniority of the individual discharging the functions. If any one agency activates its major incident plans then it may be necessary for others to start to activate their own plans in order to facilitate liaison. Where there is no requirement for direct action by an agency it may only be necessary to invoke one management level, eg the *Strategic* level may be the only one required, at least initially, following the threat of a dam rupture.

3.5 It is a characteristic of the command and control chain that it tends to be created from the bottom up. At the start of any incident for which there has been no warning the *operational* level will be activated first, with the other levels coming into being with the escalation of the incident or a greater awareness of the situation. A description of each of the levels follows.

Operational Level

3.6 On arrival at the scene of an event, the emergency services will take appropriate immediate measures and assess the extent of the problem, under the command of their respective Incident Officers. They will concentrate on their specific tasks within their areas of responsibility and act on delegated responsibility from their parent organisations until other levels of command are established. All this takes place at the *Operational* level and is the normal day-to-day arrangement for responding to any incident. The command of the resources belonging to any agency and applied within a geographical area, or used for a specific purpose, will be retained by that agency. Each agency must liaise fully and continually with others employed within the same area to ensure an efficient and combined effort. Where appropriate, the police will normally act as the co-ordinator of this response at the scene.

3.7 These arrangements will usually be adequate for the effective resolution of most incidents. However, for more serious incidents - requiring significantly greater resources - it may be necessary to implement an additional level of management.

Tactical Level

3.8 A *Tactical* level of management is introduced in order to determine priority in allocating resources, to plan and co-ordinate when a task will be undertaken, and to obtain other resources as required.

3.9 Most, but not all, of the *tactical* functions will be discharged at or close to the scene of the incident. Some agencies, particularly local authorities, will prefer to operate from their administrative offices but will normally send a liaison officer to the scene to liaise with the Incident Officer(s). Planning must also take into account that there may be a number of individual scenes, or in fact no actual scene, for example where the incident is overseas.

3.10 When more than one agency is operating at the *Tactical* level there must be consultation between the various agency Incident Officers. When an Incident Officer is operating at a tactical level he/she should not become involved with the activities at the scene but should concentrate on the overall general management. In order to effect tactical co-ordination, an inter-agency meeting should be held at regular intervals attended by each Incident Officer and normally chaired by the police. Liaison Officers from the local authority should attend and other agencies which are deemed to be required or which may have an interest should be invited to attend.

3.11 If it becomes apparent that resources or expertise beyond the level of the Tactical Commander/Incident Officer operating in a tactical capacity are required, or should there be the need to co-ordinate more than one incident/scene (where tactical command has been established), it may be necessary to implement a *Strategic* level of management.

Strategic Level

3.12 The purpose of the *Strategic* level of management is to establish a framework of policy to give support to Incident Officers operating at a tactical level of command, to give support to the Incident Officer(s) by the provision of resources, to give consideration to the prioritisation of demands from any number of Incident Officers and to determine plans for the return to a state of normality once the incident is brought under control. The requirement for strategic management may be confined to one particular agency. However, certain incidents require a multi-agency response at the *Strategic* level in order to effect resolution. In such incidents a Strategic Co-ordinating Group should be formed.

The Strategic Coordinating Group

3.13 It will normally be a police responsibility to establish and chair the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG). However, due to the nature of some major incidents another agency might appropriately initiate its formation and chair the group eg for a rabies threat. Also, chairmanship may at some stage be passed to another agency (eg in the event of a natural disaster, from the police to the local authority in order to manage the recovery phase).

3.14 The SCG is normally made up from a nominated senior member from each agency involved with the response. Each person must be able to make executive decisions in respect of resources within their agency and have the authority to seek the aid of other agencies in support of their role. The SCG also provides the focus for communication to and from the Lead Government Department (Chapter 8). Depending on the nature of the incident (eg nuclear or terrorist incidents) Government advisors or liaison officers may attend meetings.

3.15 The SCG will need to take account of the features of the particular incident, together with the professional expertise of each of the agencies and their statutory duties. On occasions it may be necessary to assign the control of specific functions to one or more of the agencies. In extreme circumstances such as a terrorist incident, it may be necessary for the police to take executive action in respect of the total incident.

3.16 The SCG should be aware of its wider role which may encompass central Government interests, handling requests for advice and assistance from individual services and agencies, and media demands. In the event of widespread disaster the SCG will need to liaise with similar neighbouring SCGs and, during the recovery phase, with The Scottish Executive.

3.17 It should develop a strategy for information to the public and for dealing with the media, designate a media centre and appoint a media centre manager (normally a police press officer).

3.18 The SCG should be based at an appropriate pre-planned location, away from the noise and confusion of the scene. It is usual to locate it at Police Headquarters.

4. THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF DISASTER VICTIMS

4.1 The care and treatment of those involved in a disaster lies at the heart of the response. This applies to the care and treatment not only of victims and their relatives and friends, but of everyone involved in the emergency response who may be greatly affected by their experience.

Locating Survivors

4.2 Survivors or casualties may not always be found near the site of a disaster (because, for instance, some may be thrown a distance away by the force of a crash or explosion or some may wander away in confusion). It is therefore important to consider the need to search the surrounding area. If this is necessary the task should be co-ordinated by the police incident officer. Where the task may be labour intensive and cover a wide area it may be appropriate to seek assistance through the prepared support arrangements.

Care of survivors

4.3 Those who have survived a disaster uninjured (or with only minor injuries) may nevertheless be suffering from shock, intense anxiety and grief. They will, therefore, need to be treated with great sensitivity. Survivors may have a variety of needs depending on the nature of the disaster. These might include:

- food, drink, rest.
- practical help, clothing, money, advice, transport.
- information on the disaster or on location of friends and relatives.
- social and psychological support.
- access to medical help for delayed effects.

All of these may be provided at a Survivor Reception Centre established by and managed under the auspices of the local authority. Sensitive management will provide a range of open and discreet services through professional and voluntary organisations, often with the assistance of survivors themselves. On arrival at a Reception Centre survivors will be registered and personal information transmitted to the Police Casualty Bureau which will then be used to reassure concerned relatives and to assist police enquiries. Order and security at a Reception Centre may be provided by the police.

The Injured

4.4 Injured survivors should be taken to a casualty clearing station (CCS) where medical and paramedical personnel will assess treatment needs, carry out any appropriate stabilisation measures and ensure that casualties are evacuated in accordance with priority for hospital treatment. The CCS may be sited in a convenient building, a tent or temporary shelter close to the ambulance loading point.

4.5 Responsibility for establishing a CCS, for ensuring the proper establishment of medical communications on site, the distribution and replenishment of medical and first aid supplies, the provision of all ambulance resources necessary for the ongoing treatment of casualties and (in liaison with the medical incident officer) conveyance of casualties to the receiving hospital(s) all lie with the ambulance incident officer.

Fatalities

4.6 The authority of the Procurator Fiscal is required before those who have been pronounced dead can be moved from the scene of the incident. Arrangements are then the responsibility of the police.

4.7 The usual practice is for bodies to be taken to a temporary mortuary where post-mortems can be carried out, although they might be taken first to a temporary holding area. Planning for temporary mortuary provision should be an inter-agency activity with the local authority taking the lead. A number of criteria have to be met to satisfy Health and Safety Regulations when establishing a temporary mortuary. Therefore the identification of suitable buildings, together with arranging the necessary logistical and administrative infrastructure, should form part of the preplanning process. Local authorities might find it helpful to refer to the guidance contained in "Dealing with Fatalities During Disasters" available from The Scottish Executive Justice Department Emergency Planning Branch.

4.8 The task of identifying the dead is the responsibility of the police, who in this regard are agents of the Procurator Fiscal and work under his/her overall policy direction. The Police Incident Officer is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are set up for liaising with the Procurator Fiscal; supervising the running of the mortuary; recording and evaluating post and ante mortem data; informing next of kin; and compiling identification evidence for submission to the Procurator Fiscal. Close liaison with local authority and caring agencies who support next of kin is essential.

Casualty Bureau

4.9 In the event of a disaster the role of the Police Casualty Bureau is to provide a central contact point for all those seeking or providing information about persons who might have been involved and to collect data and collate all records. As part of this process the police may send documentation teams to each receiving hospital, mortuary and survivor reception centre. The functions of the Bureau are:

- handling enquiries from the general public about relatives and friends who might have been involved.

- collating details of survivors, their condition and their whereabouts.
- informing enquirers of the condition and whereabouts of the survivors.
- confirming areas of evacuation and the location of evacuees.
- gathering data to assist in the identification of casualties.
- compiling a list of persons believed to have been involved who are now missing.

4.10 Once the Casualty Bureau has been established, its telephone number(s) will be publicised through the media, with the public being asked to provide information on persons thought to have been involved in the disaster who have not been accounted for. This information assists the police in their task of identifying casualties and the deceased.

4.11 In the event of an air crash, the Emergency Procedures Information Centre (EPIC) managed by British Airways at Heathrow may open. If so, its telephone number will be broadcast. EPIC would act as a central airline information co-ordinating point, collating information about reservations, next of kin and other relevant data, and would work in support of the police and the Procurator Fiscal.

4.12 If foreign nationals have been - or are thought to have been - involved in the disaster, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will refer any enquiries from foreign consulates, embassies or high commissions to the Casualty Bureau. The police will, in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, inform the consular authorities of the death of any of their nationals. Ambassadors or High Commissioners may wish to visit the disaster scene. Arrangements for VIP visits are discussed in the next chapter.

Friends and Relatives

4.13 Recent experience of disasters has shown that, if people believe their friends and relatives may have been involved, it is likely that many of them will travel to the scene or to meeting points such as travel terminals. If necessary, arrangements for the reception of friends and relatives will be made by the local authorities in consultation with the police and other organisations concerned. The fullest possible information should be given to enquirers seeking news of those involved in a disaster. Experience has shown that this is best done in a controlled way with general enquiries being referred to a specific source. This helps to ensure that consistent and non-contradictory information is given out. Friends and relatives who may be feeling intense anxiety, shock or grief need to be treated with sympathy and understanding and allowed privacy and solitude away from media attention.

Evacuation

4.14 In some circumstances it may be necessary to advise the public to evacuate a given area or stay put and shelter indoors. Such circumstances include risks to life or health from:

- the release or threatened release of radioactive materials, or other hazardous substances.
- the spread of fire.
- explosion.
- severe storms.
- flooding.
- environmental contamination.

4.15 The possible need for evacuation in the event of the release or threatened release of radioactive material is addressed in "Arrangements for Responding to Nuclear Emergencies" published by HMSO on behalf of the Health and Safety Executive (ISBN 0 11 885525 5) and so is not considered further in this chapter.

4.16 In the event of the release or threatened release of non-radioactive hazardous materials, additional information on the nature of the risk may be obtained from the fire service, from chemical data systems and other accredited sources.

4.17 Warnings of severe storms or other adverse weather are issued by the Meteorological Office and/or Regional Weather Centres to police forces, local authorities and other emergency services in the form of severe weather warnings. In addition, warnings of abnormally high tides that could possibly lead to flooding are issued by the Meteorological Office to the police and to SEPA.

4.18 It is normally the police who recommend to the local authority whether or not to evacuate, and who define the area to be evacuated. Their recommendation will take account of advice from the fire service on risks associated with fire, contamination and other hazards, from the ambulance, health and social services on problems associated with moving people who are frail or disabled or at risk for any other reason, and from local authorities on possible places of shelter within the area. The police can only recommend evacuation and have no power to require people to leave their homes. Past experience has shown that people with domestic pets may be unwilling to leave their homes unless arrangements include their pets.

4.19 In considering or executing evacuation care must always be taken not to put people at risk by bringing them outdoors when they might be more effectively protected by sheltering indoors. This is particularly important in the case of the release of hazardous substances, or where terrorist devices may be present.

4.20 The physical difficulties of large-scale evacuation should not be underestimated. If it is decided to evacuate a given area, evacuation assembly points should be set up near the area

and, if time permits, signposted. Those in the affected area should be advised to go to their nearest evacuation assembly point. This can be done by house-to-house call or by using loud-hailers, mobile public address systems, radio or TV announcements or any combination of these methods. People taking prescribed and other medications should be reminded to carry these with them.

4.21 The police should, as far as is practicable, take steps to ensure the security of property left empty after evacuation. When arrangements are being made for evacuation and for securing property attention will need to be paid to the safety of emergency service and local authority workers who might be exposed to risk whilst working outdoors.

4.22 At the evacuation assembly point local authority staff should co-ordinate the dispersal of evacuees. In order to account for all people evacuated from an affected area it is important that those leaving reception or rest centres and intending to stay with friends or relatives are encouraged to register their eventual destination at the centre. Rest centres should be staffed by trained non-emergency services personnel.

Social and Psychological Support

4.23 There may be an immediate need to provide social and psychological support to those who are suffering from the effects of the disaster, including members of the emergency services as well as others called upon to respond. There will undoubtedly be a need for social and psychological support services to be available in the immediate aftermath and possibly in the longer term. Much will depend on the nature and scale of the disaster.

Religious and Cultural Needs

4.24 Any disaster occurring in the UK may involve members of religious minorities, whether they are resident in this country or visiting from abroad. Emergency services, local authorities and others responding to a disaster should therefore bear in mind that those people who suffer from its effects may have particular religious requirements relating to medical treatment, hygiene, diet and places for prayer. Various sections of the faith communities have already established emergency plans. It is therefore important to integrate, as far as possible, these arrangements into the other existing contingency arrangements.

4.25 A memorial service may provide an opportunity for those affected by the disaster to share their grief with others. The timing of such an event will need to be considered carefully.

Disaster Appeals

4.26 Wherever a disaster occurs people often wish to contribute in some way. Unsolicited donations are therefore likely to be received by, for example, the local authority even before any appeal has been launched; dealing with donations and accompanying letters will prove to be a time consuming task and it will probably be seen to be preferable in every way for a

disaster fund to be launched. However, establishing a disaster fund can be complex given the need to co-ordinate the handling of donations, create the appropriate trust, appoint trustees and, later, distribute funds to the proper beneficiaries. These all require extensive research and planning.

5. INFORMATION AND THE MEDIA

Introduction

5.1 Recent years have seen a rapid advance in telecommunication and information technology capabilities. Television channels devoted entirely to news and extended news programmes on other channels are with us to stay. The impact made at the scene of a disaster by those engaged in gathering material for the media can be massive and it is vital to prepare for the influx of media representatives - local, national and international. In little more than 12 hours after Pan American Airways flight 103 crashed there were at least 500 media people at Lockerbie, including 17 TV crews and a vast array of equipment - vehicles, cameras, communications and so on.

5.2 The purpose of this chapter is therefore to highlight some of the problems which can arise in handling the media's needs for information in the event of a disaster and to suggest arrangements for overcoming those problems.

Assisting the Media

5.3 In the first instance, the task of coping with media pressures usually falls to the police in their role as co-ordinators of the response at and around the scene of disaster and with their responsibility for criminal investigation. But there are other aspects of a disaster - temporary accommodation for victims and perhaps their relatives and friends, safety of damaged buildings, road access and so on - which would call for a quick reaction by local authorities and so they too must be involved in the media response from the outset. Depending on the nature of a disaster, attention may also focus on industrial operators and commercial or other organisations: for example, Occidental Petroleum (Caledonia) Ltd was in the front line of media attention after the Piper Alpha disaster.

Initial Actions

5.4 Media personnel will arrive very quickly. They will often have learnt of the disaster at the same time as the emergency services and, when they arrive, will expect to have access to information and briefing. Demands from local and regional media will quickly be augmented by demands from national and - depending on the nature of the disaster - international media. If these demands are not anticipated, media representatives are likely to add to the confusion. It is possible to protect the cellular telephone system from saturation by invoking the Access Overload Control for Cellular RadioTelephones (ACCOLC) whereby the network would be available only to selected organisations. (The police incident officer is normally the only authority able to invoke ACCOLC. Exceptionally, the Cabinet Office may take this responsibility after consultation with the lead Government Department.)

5.5 Experience has shown the value of immediately dealing with the following points:

- Control of access to the disaster site. This is a police responsibility, put in place whenever practical, intended to allow rescue services to carry out their work unhindered and to preserve evidence at what may be the scene of a crime. It has

to be anticipated that the broadcasting media in particular will bring large communications vehicles to the scene. In addition, helicopters are often deployed and control of the airspace may be an early consideration.

- Establishing a media liaison point. This is a designated point at the disaster scene, preferably outside the outer cordon, for the reception of media personnel, checks on their bona fides and briefing on arrangements for reporting, filming and photography. It may be little more than a rendezvous point with further facilities provided at a media centre.
- Nominating a media liaison officer. The swift attendance at the scene of a spokesperson (likely to be from the police) should ease the pressure from the media. Failure to arrange this will prompt media representatives to approach anybody available, which could lend credibility to inaccurate sources. Brief interviews with the senior police, fire, ambulance or other officers at the site will add authority to the information being given.

5.6 The media will use all means of communication and any available contact point to gather information. Lack of co-ordination and information-sharing will result in different, and even contradictory, messages emerging. It is therefore important that the media response is co-ordinated through the nominated media liaison officer from the earliest possible stage and that other spokespersons deal only with issues that fall within their own area of responsibility unless prior agreement has been reached. Even then, it is desirable to co-ordinate statements.

5.7 In addition, in the initial stage of the disaster response, it may be helpful for the following points to be borne in mind:

- The media may need to be reminded that in the period immediately following a disaster no-one can know precisely what has happened. Initial statements should focus on what is happening, what the limitations of knowledge are at the time and what is being done to arrive at a fuller appreciation of the situation. If such statements are backed by a commitment to provide accurate information as soon as it is available, media personnel are more likely to attend briefings and thus accept a measure of control, particularly if the briefings are scheduled at regular intervals.
- The media will welcome any factual statements - particularly from emergency services' eye witnesses. However, such statements should not include speculation on the cause of the disaster, nor premature or uncorroborated estimates of the numbers of casualties.
- Care should be taken that information about casualties is not released until details have been confirmed and the next of kin informed. It may be necessary to explain that it can take a long time to identify victims.
- Limitations on the release of information, often because of the need to avoid prejudicing what may become a criminal prosecution, should be clearly and frankly explained.

5.8 There will be great pressure on reporters to seek interviews with survivors and relatives but many will feel too shocked and distressed to give interviews. The first consideration should always be the well-being of the individual.

5.9 It is important to develop the best possible relationship with media personnel from the start. Pressure of competition between media teams and individuals will make them sensitive to any restrictions which appear to them to be unfair. If they feel they have been treated unreasonably, some representatives of the media will try to make their own arrangements which may obstruct rescue work and compromise evidence for any necessary investigation. Well managed media relations should alleviate these problems and should also allow positive advantage to be taken of the help which the media can provide, for example by broadcasting appeals for blood donors, publicising details of any evacuation planned and broadcasting casualty bureau telephone numbers.

5.10 The management of large numbers of media representatives can be assisted through pooling arrangements, particularly if safety or security considerations restrict access to a disaster site. A pool should only be operated when absolutely necessary. A pool might, for example, comprise one television crew, one newspaper reporter, a stills photographer and a radio reporter. Although a limit can be set on the number of media personnel to be allowed access to the site, such restrictions are seldom welcome and it is best to allow the media to decide who their representatives should be. Additional pooling facilities may be required for overseas media representatives. It is helpful to identify suitable sites for coverage of the disaster by media personnel who are not, at the time, included in pooling arrangements.

A Media Response Organisation

5.11 In the event of a disaster the initial actions just described may be no more than holding arrangements. As events develop the need for a comprehensive media response organisation headed by someone who equates to a public relations manager may become apparent. It is recognised that not all organisations or agencies have such a person, but experience has shown it to be extremely helpful. The public relations manager for the disaster can be from the police, local authority, or other appropriate organisation depending on circumstances and locally agreed plans.

5.12 It is essential for the public relations manager to be fully involved in the senior management arrangements for dealing with the disaster. They should be fully in the picture and can advise on and plan the media response. It is recommended that the public relations manager oversees all aspects of the media response, including:

- activities at the media liaison point;
- arrangements for the media to visit the site, possibly including transport where the disaster is in a remote area;
- accreditation of media personnel;
- management of the media centre when one is established;

- monitoring of likely media activities related to the disaster but at locations remote from the disaster scene; and
- monitoring of media coverage.

Media Centre

5.13 A disaster may also justify the establishment of a media centre to provide working accommodation for media personnel, a news conference and briefing area, facilities for monitoring television, radio and newspapers and a press office with communications equipment. Responsibility for establishing the centre should be agreed in advance as part of the planning process. It should wherever possible be close to the scene of the disaster and staffed by representatives of the major organisations with responsibility for handling the disaster; these should be people familiar with media relations - press officers wherever possible. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of central government press officers. The difficulties of setting up a media centre should not be underestimated and plans should be comprehensive yet flexible.

5.14 Emergency plans should identify buildings which could be used as a media centre, although experience has shown that facilities can be set up rapidly in any suitable building.

5.15 A media centre offers a number of advantages to all concerned.

- It provides the media representatives with a known source for the most accurate and up-to-date information which the authorities can make available.
- Once links with the rescuers and others central to the disaster response are in place and spokespersons have been nominated, smooth flows of information can soon be established, compared and co-ordinated.
- There is then a better chance of identifying and dealing with any potential differences in approach, and agreed approaches can be quickly relayed to the emergency services and other control centres.
- Oversight from the media centre should help to control media presence at the site, whether this is for photo-opportunities or briefing.
- Monitoring arrangements may be set up at the media centre to enable all concerned to be aware of what the media are broadcasting or publishing.
- In the event of a widespread or multi-site disaster, a single media centre could serve as a focus for several media liaison points at differing locations.

The same media centre may suffice for both initial and recovery phases of the disaster response.

Transfer of the Media Operation to Local Authority or Health Board Control

5.16 It has already been noted that the police are likely to take the lead initially in dealing with the media in their role as co-ordinators of the disaster response. As the emphasis switches to the recovery phase, the overall lead may pass to the relevant local authority or other organisation which might then take the lead in dealing with continued media interest and providing any necessary public advice and information.

5.17 In some circumstances - for example, when, after the initial phase of the disaster response, the focus of media interest moves to NHS hospitals - it may be appropriate for the relevant health board to take control of the media operation. Again, a handover will be facilitated if the police (particularly the casualty bureau) and NHS media teams have been working in close co-operation from the outset.

Remote Handling

5.18 In some disasters attention has focused on communities and individuals living many miles from the scene who nevertheless become a centre of media attention. An example is the home town of those killed whilst travelling. This, too, may require co-ordinated media-handling arrangements to ensure an efficient and coherent response from the authorities.

Liaison with Central Government

5.19 A disaster inevitably results in requests for Ministerial briefing and statements. It is the responsibility of the lead department to co-ordinate a consistent and properly considered response by central government. On media matters, therefore, Chief Constables and local authority Chief Executives should look to the lead department's press officers as their main central government contact.

5.20 In practice, Government press officers may need to be quickly at the scene in order to:

- explain the involvement of Government or the relevant regulatory body in the disaster response.
- be involved with any arrangements for VIP visits.
- provide feedback to central government.

5.21 When central government accident investigators are called in, the involvement of the relevant Government Department press office may continue far beyond the initial stages of the disaster.

Information to the public

5.22 Under certain legislation, such as the CIMAH regulations (Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations) and PIRER (the Public Information for Radiation Emergencies Regulations), there is a duty to provide information to the public. PIRER specifically aims to ensure that members of the public likely to be, or actually, affected by a radiation emergency are given appropriate information. It is the duty of the site operator to prepare and disseminate prior information; local authorities are required to ensure that information is received by those actually affected by an emergency. The arrangements to provide this information should be integrated into the wider media response plan. See also Chapter 6.

Visits by VIPs

5.23 Visits by VIPs can lift the morale of those affected by the disaster as well as those who are involved with the response.

5.24 A Government Minister may make an early visit to the scene of a disaster and the injured, not only to mark public concern but also to be able to report to Parliament on the disaster response. If a Minister is to visit the scene he may be accompanied by the local Member(s) of Parliament; this would be arranged by the Minister's Private Office. It is possible that the scale of a disaster may in addition prompt visits by a member of the Royal Family and/or the Prime Minister. Local VIP visitors may include the Lord Lieutenant, religious leaders, local MPs, and local elected representatives. If foreign nationals have been involved in the disaster, their country's Ambassador, High Commissioner or other dignitaries may also want to visit the scene.

5.25 Visits to the scene need to take account of the local situation and the immediate effects of the disaster on the local community. It may be inappropriate for VIP visitors to go to the disaster site itself whilst rescue operations are still going on, particularly if casualties are still trapped. VIP visits should not interrupt rescue and life-saving work and the police, as co-ordinators of the disaster response, should be consulted about the timing of visits.

5.26 VIP visits will inevitably cause some disruption, and visitors will want this to be kept to a minimum. The additional need for security may also cause a problem. However, there are also dividends to be gained from such visits as they may boost the morale of all those involved, including the injured and the emergency services, and give an opportunity to place on record public gratitude for their efforts.

5.27 Local services are, of course, experienced at handling VIP visits in normal circumstances and many of the usual considerations will apply to visits to a disaster site.

5.28 Visiting Ministers and other VIPs will probably require briefing before visiting the site (which they will doubtless want to see) and will certainly require briefing before any meetings with the media. In the case of Government Ministers, arrangements should be agreed with the press officer of the lead Government department.

5.29 In addition, VIPs are likely to want to meet those survivors who are well enough to see them. It will be for the hospital authorities to decide, on the basis of medical advice and respect for the wishes of individual patients, whether it is appropriate for VIPs and/or the

media to visit the casualties. If the media cannot have access to wards, the VIP can still be interviewed afterwards at the hospital entrance about how patients and medical staff are coping.

Sustaining the response

5.30 Disasters place enormous demands on all involved in the response. Media interest, particularly if it is international, can create pressure on a round-the-clock basis. Chief Constables and local authority Chief Executives will wish to take sustainability into account during the response to a disaster. The pooling of resources in a joint media centre should be helpful in this respect. It needs to be remembered that sustainability applies not only to operational personnel but also to those involved in providing clerical support.

5.31 In the much longer term, experience has shown that media interest in the disaster is revived on the anniversary of the occasion and Chief Executives may wish to give consideration as to how these occasions should be handled.

6. INFORMATION AND ADVICE TO THE PUBLIC

Information and advice needs

6.1 It should be recognised that the provision of information and advice should, whenever practicable, begin before any incident occurs eg to residents near a dangerous site.

6.2 When a disaster occurs, the public is likely to require a variety of information and advice, the particular needs depending on the nature of the incident and the current state of the emergency. Matters on which information or advice might be required by the public include:

- the nature of the incident
- the number and identity of any casualties
- any road closures or other travel restrictions
- any protective measures to be taken, eg closure of doors or windows
- whether any leaflets on the problem are readily available
- any professional advice or help recommended to be sought by affected persons, eg from a doctor, perhaps where there is an issue of safety of foodstuffs/drinking water
- the number of any 'Helpline'
- what to do if the 'Helpline' number is engaged
- confirmation that, where appropriate, that information previously given still applies
- longer term matters, eg financial assistance, compensation claims, repairs, public meetings.

Ways of meeting the needs

6.3 Dependent on the nature of the incident and the imminence of risk, measures which might be taken (singly or in combination) to provide the information include:

- advice from loudspeakers
- advice from vehicles touring round with loudspeakers
- knocking on doors in the area
- using any local warning systems available
- using community networks eg Neighbourhood Watch
- telephoning people or institutions in the area
- using a GIS-based system for automatic telephoning of people and institutions in the area ([eg 'PWIT' system or other commercially available system])
- having the mass media transmit messages
- breaking into the mass media under the Government's scheme for major emergencies requiring such action
- public information centres.

Level and nature of consideration required

6.4 Some decisions on these matters may have to be taken locally and immediately by Incident Officers, be they at Operational or Tactical level. Where the incident has arisen from an accident at a commercial enterprise or similar, the company concerned will also be involved.

6.5 But they are all matters which any Strategic Co-ordinating Group would ultimately consider, bearing in mind (as would also Incident Officers) the nature, severity and scale of the incident; the human and other resources available; and the need to strike the right balance between protection of the public and avoidance of unnecessary panic.

Accuracy of information and advice

6.6 It is clearly of the utmost importance to seek to ensure that any information or, more particularly, advice about personal safety, given to the public is as accurate and as consistent as possible. This may on occasion mean striking a difficult balance between giving as early warning/advice as possible and achieving full confidence in the accuracy of information.

6.7 A record should be kept of the nature and time of issue of all advice to the public.

7. THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Introduction

7.1 Disasters can overstretch the resources of the emergency and local authority services and the value of additional support from the voluntary sector has been demonstrated on many occasions. These occasions have also shown that voluntary activity is more effective if planned for in advance. This chapter describes the principles to be followed.

7.2 The voluntary sector in the UK is large and diverse. Those preparing disaster responses should take into account four kinds of voluntary effort:

- established organisations such as the British Red Cross Society, St. Andrews Ambulance Association, the Salvation Army and the Women's Royal Voluntary Service;
- specialist skills offered by, for example: groups of doctors (such as the British Association for Immediate Care, BASIC), voluntary radio operators (such as the Radio Amateurs Network, RAYNET) and search and rescue organisations including the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and mountain rescue teams;
- individuals, not necessarily in recognised voluntary organisations, whose help is offered or requested on the day; and
- organisations which specialise in providing emotional support and counselling, such as Cruse or the Samaritans, and specific counselling offered by the police and armed services.

Planning the Voluntary Sector's Contribution

7.3 General issues of planning and preparing disaster response are discussed in chapter 2. But in planning how the voluntary sector may contribute, the following points are relevant.

- One method of involving the voluntary organisations in the planning for disasters is to group them with an appropriate functional grouping of agencies with common interests and shared skills. A functional group can agree roles and responsibilities and bring together professional and voluntary agencies prior to a disaster in order to build team working and clarify skills, experience and potential contribution to an emergency response.
- The skills and experience of voluntary organisations and the community itself vary from place to place. It is therefore important that local organisations work closely together in preparing for local response.
- Co-ordination in preparation and response will be more effective if the voluntary sector fits into the overall management structure in a well defined and mutually agreed manner. This needs to suit local circumstances, be clearly understood by all concerned, and have clearly identified contact points.

- The health, safety, and welfare of emergency workers, including volunteers, must be a fundamental concern of those managing a response.
- There should be simple yet effective call-out arrangements consistent with those employed by the professional services. The support available for professional services should be extended to the volunteers who assist them.

7.4 When disaster strikes, people who are not part of any voluntary organisation will also wish to help and will offer their services. The local authority, in conjunction with the police, should establish a volunteer receiving point away from the scene to deal with such approaches. If the volunteer receiving point wishes to accept the offer of help the volunteer can then be asked to report to the rendezvous point or to any other designated position. It should be noted that individual volunteers may require a considerable amount of management and leadership if they are to be effective. The expertise of local volunteer bureaux or experienced members of established voluntary organisations may be helpful in this respect, but much will depend on the skills and managerial experience of individual volunteers.

Training and Exercising

7.5 When considering the particular contribution which the voluntary sector can make to the disaster response it should be noted that established voluntary organisations and volunteer groups will usually have their own emergency arrangements. Wherever possible these should be integrated with the agreed local emergency scheme. All agencies should aim for joint training and exercising so that problems can be identified, plans and procedures updated and working relationships fostered. There will be some overlap between the functions and capabilities of different voluntary organisations. Effective communication, planning and training will ensure that opportunities are identified for sharing heavy workloads and providing mutual support. General issues of training and exercising are also discussed in Chapter 9.

8. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND LEAD DEPARTMENTS

The Lead Department Concept

8.1 It is fundamental to the arrangements for dealing with disasters in the UK that the first response is at the local level. Where local services find that the scale of a disaster puts response beyond the capacity of their own resources, their recourse is usually to mutual aid arrangements with services in adjacent areas.

8.2 More often than not, however, central government will also have a role to play. This may be an active role - where, for example, local services seek specialist advice or assistance from a central government department or the main source of information about the disaster lies at central government level (eg in the case of overseas nuclear accidents or satellite accidents). On other occasions the central government role may be limited to dealing with Parliamentary, media and public enquiries. In either case, a specific Government Department, nominated if necessary by the Cabinet Office, will take the lead.

8.3 The nomination of a lead department does not affect the underlying principle that wherever possible day-to-day procedures and links should be used for dealing with disasters. Local organisations should therefore aim to use normal links with Government Departments rather than channelling all dealings through the lead department. If, exceptionally, special arrangements need to replace these normal day-to-day links (for example to co-ordinate public information) this would be made clear to all concerned by The Scottish Executive after consultation with the Cabinet Office.

8.4 The choice of lead department is based on the following considerations.

- The nature of the disaster. There is usually a clear link between this and the normal business of the department (for example, a transport accident and the Department of Transport or a military nuclear accident and the Ministry of Defence). Advice on this aspect may be obtained at any time from The Fire Service and Emergency Planning Division of The Scottish Executive Justice Department.
- Access to information. Ready access to a flow of up-to-date and accurate information is essential for a lead department. The chances of achieving this are greater if officials of the department, agencies and organisations concerned know each other and have worked together. The public information division of the lead department has a special responsibility for ensuring that information originating from central government is consistent with that being given locally.
- The availability of facilities. Where a disaster is large-scale or protracted, it may be necessary to use a dedicated emergency room and communications. The departments most likely to be called upon to act as lead departments have such facilities.

The Role of the Lead Department

8.5 A central government lead department is expected to be prepared to undertake some or all of the following tasks.

- Co-ordinating the activities of central government departments in the response to a disaster, providing a framework within which individual departments can discharge their specific responsibilities. (An important part of this work will be to ensure that the necessary links are established with the local response.)
- Co-ordinating the collection of information on the disaster and its effects for the purposes of briefing Ministers and informing Parliament.
- Providing information to the public and the media at national level.

8.6 However activities are organised, it is incumbent upon the lead department to ensure that there is no unjustified duplication of requests for information from those busily engaged at the scene. Departments are expected first to check whether information they require for their own purposes is already available within the lead department. In a great many cases the lead department will be able to obtain information collected by other departments for their own use, avoiding the need to trouble people at the scene.

The Scottish Executive

8.7 If a disaster affected only Scotland, The Scottish Executive would, where appropriate, take the lead and there have been a number of instances of this in recent times. Even if not in the lead, it would have an important role acting in close co-operation with the nominated lead department. (One example is the crash of Pan American Airways flight 103 in December 1988. The Department of Transport was in the lead, but The Scottish Executive played a major role in co-ordinating central government action in Scotland in support of the response based at Lockerbie.) If the circumstances required, The Scottish Executive would also open its Emergency Room in St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh or its smaller Emergency Room in Glasgow, to act as a focus for the co-ordination of information and a corporate Scottish Executive response.

8.8 Major emergencies in Scotland in recent years have demonstrated the important role played by The Scottish Executive Fire Service and Emergency Planning Division, in facilitating communications and in liaising with Army HQ Scotland to obtain military assistance. It is important for local authorities to be aware of the need to inform the Division at an early stage of any incident causing significant disruption and/or press attention. In the case of such major incidents as a nuclear disaster, local authority arrangements should acknowledge the need for the Division or any other lead department and also the Scottish Executive Information Directorate to be provided with facilities at the local control centre.

8.9 A feature of many emergencies affecting Scotland in recent years has been the activation of the 'Bellwin Scheme' which provides financial assistance to local authorities. The early notification to The Scottish Executive (Emergency Planning Division or Local

Government Finance Division) will be helpful in such circumstances and authorities should bear in mind that they should maintain accurate records of expenditure against the possibility of having to make a claim under the scheme.

Scottish Emergency Coordinating Committee

8.10 Contingency arrangements are in place under which Ministers may activate the Scottish Emergency Co-ordinating Committee (SECC) should it be felt that the additional stresses caused by a disaster require support to be given to the normal administrative machinery at the local level. The SECC is not an additional level of government; it is an integral part of central government standing ready to operate when required. It has no executive authority other than that delegated to departmental and other representatives by their parent body. While it has not been activated for many years, it can be rapidly established if necessary.

8.11 The Secretary of SEJD would chair the SECC. Other departments would be represented as required and there would be representatives from the emergency services, the armed forces and other relevant organisations such as British Telecom, Civil Aviation Authority, etc. Representatives of other organisations could be co-opted to the Committee as required.

8.12 The principal functions of the SECC would be to:

- Co-ordinate central government activities so as to facilitate an effective response to the emergency, with particular reference to maintaining the essentials of life for the community.
- Act, where appropriate, as a channel of communications with the bodies engaged in dealing with the emergency.
- Monitor the effects of the emergency and the adequacy of arrangements.
- Ensure that information is made publicly available in accordance with Government policy at the time.
- Report, as directed, to the Secretary of State, The Scottish Executive Management Group and the Chairman of the Civil Contingencies Committee of the Cabinet Office.

Another matter which might need to be considered by the SECC is:

- Deciding priorities for allocated armed forces manpower and resources to assist the civil authorities under the Military Assistance to Civil Ministries (MACM) or Civil Communities (MACC) schemes.

9. CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO PLANNING, TRAINING AND EXERCISING

Introduction

9.1 The foundations of a co-ordinated response are the preparedness, expertise and mutual awareness of each of the local emergency services, the local authorities and other involved organisations. The effectiveness of the response turns on sound teamwork and co-ordination. At the core of local preparedness, however, is the framework which the emergency services and local authorities have evolved for planning, training for and exercising the local response. This chapter offers guidance on these subjects.

A Co-ordinated Approach to Preparedness

9.2 Effective preparation of the disaster response requires co-operation between chief officers and their staffs and this is likely to be more effective if it is properly structured. Various structures are possible, but one which has been adopted in a number of areas is the establishment of a police-led senior co-ordinating group in which chief or senior officers of the local authorities of the area, the emergency services, NHS management, and other key organisations meet at intervals to consider plans, procedures, joint training and exercises. Much of the rest of this chapter assumes such an arrangement but, whatever the arrangement, it is the principles which are important. Structures need to evolve to meet local circumstances; for example in most areas arrangements will need to recognise that local authority boundaries do not match those of the emergency services, and in some cases sites containing hazardous substances will have potential to affect more than one local authority. Authorities may find it convenient and fruitful to set up co-ordinating arrangements on a police force area basis.

9.3 The senior level co-ordination arrangements should be supported by working level groups to carry out detailed work. These lower level arrangements may involve personnel whose job is primarily concerned with disaster preparedness, for example local authority emergency planning officers and their emergency services equivalents.

Planning

9.4 The senior co-ordinating group or its equivalent will want to ensure that local plans are properly co-ordinated and cover all reasonably foreseeable local hazards. It is good practice to involve as necessary other bodies whose responsibilities are particularly relevant to local disaster preparedness, including the voluntary sector and statutory bodies such as the water authorities, SEPA, Scottish Natural Heritage, and industrial and commercial organisations. The Health and Safety Executive may also have a role to play in providing information about hazards and risks and acting as a source of local expert knowledge.

9.5 In addition to identifying and planning for specific hazards, the senior co-ordinating group or its equivalent may want to give thought to particular issues which have caused difficulties in the past. These may include the following matters.

- Communications have sometimes proved to be inadequate in previous disaster responses. Local Authorities and the emergency services will have their own chains of command and communications arrangements. It is important at the planning stage to provide for clear and effective communication and identified lines of demarcation between agencies.
- There is a need to ensure that different statutory services and authorities are not planning to use the same voluntary resources. To ensure that the voluntary sector's contribution is used to best effect, it may therefore be useful to review jointly plans for the use of the voluntary sector and to clarify with the sector itself how it sees itself fitting into the contingency arrangements for responding to a disaster (see Chapter 7).
- Organisations involved in the disaster response will need to have co-ordinated arrangements for dealing with the media. Plans in this area might be prepared and updated in conjunction with The Scottish Executive Information Directorate and local media organisations (See Chapter 5).

9.6 Disasters may well affect more than one local authority or police force area and the senior co-ordinating group or its equivalent may also include cross-boundary planning in its remit. Prior arrangements for mutual aid and some compatibility with the plans and procedures of neighbours are certain to be valuable in the event of a disaster which spans boundaries.

9.7 Another area for consideration is the possibility of the response having to be sustained at an unusually intensive level, possibly over an extended period. Arrangements -probably involving mutual aid - should be devised to enable the response to be maintained, whilst at the same time recognising the need to relieve those engaged in it. In addition, account should be taken of the extent to which "business as usual" has to carry on in parallel with the disaster response.

Joint Training and Exercising

9.8 Planning should be underpinned by training and exercising and the senior co-ordinating group or its equivalent should ensure that maximum benefit is gained from these activities by all parties.

9.9 For the police and fire services, and some of the NHS emergency services, responding to disaster can be considered as part of their day-to-day work. For others -local authorities and industrial or commercial concerns (including the utilities) - the response may be an extension of normal roles. For some groups, such as volunteers and military personnel, the response may be unrelated to normal day-to-day activities. Joint training in a properly structured manner is important if the full potential of all the agencies involved is to be realised. Key training topics which are likely to be relevant to all who may be involved in the co-ordinated response include the following issues.

- Awareness. This is a universal requirement for all who might be involved, however remotely, in the disaster response. Attention should be drawn to the

range of possible impacts of disaster, to the numbers of affected persons which may result (including anxious or bereaved relatives and friends and indeed some of those responding) and to the potential scale and complexity of the response required. For the emergency services awareness training will cover in more detail aspects of joint operations at and around the disaster scene. For local authorities the emphasis will be on how services other than the 3 main emergency services can combine to support those in the initial stages of the response, to care for people affected by the event in various ways, to maintain essential services and to prepare for recovery from the disaster. Such training might also include elected members who will need to be aware of the role they may have to play in a disaster. For persons outwith the emergency services and local authorities, a general familiarity with the principles of the coordinated response will suffice.

- Liaison and co-ordination. This should highlight the importance of liaison and co-operation in the planning and delivery of the coordinated response. Good practice, conveyed through joint training and the promotion of awareness at all levels/ranks within an organisation, is crucial.
- Communications. Subjects for training might include: familiarisation with other organisations' forms, terminology and call-out arrangements where these are different, awareness of ECN and satellite facilities, awareness of relevant contacts lists, and use of information technology.
- Media relations. In addition to the training required for both assisting and making use of the media, practical training in interview and news conference techniques will be of considerable benefit.
- Recognition of stress. Social and psychological aftercare following a disaster should be considered as part of the disaster response and recovery process. General training should be given in the recognition of stress both in the victims of disaster and in those responding and in appropriate referral of those affected.
- The international dimension. Included in this are problems arising from disasters in which casualties include a large number of foreign nationals.

9.10 Much training for the inter-disciplinary aspects of the integrated response is likely to be carried out in-house but other sources are available. Some are listed below.

- Home Office Colleges. The Emergency Planning College at Easingwold provides a range of multi-disciplinary training in the form of seminars, workshops and courses. It aims to disseminate good practice and lessons learned. It is also a centre for the deposit of and access to exercise reports and other emergency planning related literature. The Police Staff College, Bramshill provides a disaster management course primarily for senior police officers. The Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh currently provides some relevant training courses.
- Scottish Executive courses and seminars. The Scottish Executive runs short, general emergency planning courses which are open to a wide range of local and national agencies. The Scottish Police College, and to a lesser extent the Scottish

Fire Service Training School, also include appropriate training in certain of their courses. In addition The Scottish Executive organises each year, in conjunction with the Scottish Emergency Planning Society and The Emergency Planning College, a programme of specialist seminars. Details can be obtained from your own Emergency Planning Officer.

- NHS/Medical. Both health boards and the British Association for Immediate Care run courses on the command and control of the medical response.

9.11 Joint exercising is a vital part of local disaster preparedness. Joint exercises test plans and procedures, provide practical training in the integrated response to disaster and enable working relationships to be formed between those likely to be involved in that response. It is good practice for an integrated response exercise schedule to be agreed locally.

9.12 Exercises may take a number of forms, the most common of which are as follows.

- Table-top exercises. These, or other simulated exercises, can be particularly cost effective. They can be designed to exercise the command and control of the overall integrated response or any part of it. It is important in table-top exercises to be realistic and not to ignore the physical difficulties which, for example, deployments and communications present. These exercises are particularly useful because of the ability to 'stop-the-clock' and discuss points and decisions made as they arise. They develop the scenario and evaluate aspects of the response from those likely to be involved. The extent of the control room participation can be readily adjusted to cope with budgetary constraints, a lack of availability of personnel to plan and participate in exercises and restrictions on the use of other resources.
- Computer-based simulation. As various forms of information technology become established in operations rooms and emergency centres, this type of exercise may be particularly helpful in enabling managers and operators to practice in their operational environment. In addition, disaster response computer simulation is a technique which shows considerable promise.
- Live exercises. These can be resource-intensive and should therefore be planned and prepared carefully. It is difficult to replicate the conditions of a real disaster fully; but live exercises are one of the best ways (short of responding to a real disaster) of testing procedures and liaison processes and of incorporating lessons learnt into revised plans. For live exercises it is useful to provide for umpires who can monitor, control and report on the operational response and the exercise arrangements.

9.13 Following an exercise of any sort there should be a de-brief of the officials and key players. If the exercise is to be of value to others lessons learned need to be collated and disseminated. The Emergency Planning College maintains a database of exercise reports which can be accessed by anyone with an interest in emergency planning.

9.14 There are a number of mandatory exercises run throughout the year by various agencies and full or partial participation in one or more of these may be helpful in rehearsing some or all of the local response. Examples include emergency exercises undertaken by:

- those operating nuclear installations and CIMAH sites
- HM Coastguard
- port and harbour authorities
- airport authorities
- railway authorities.

It may also be possible to take similar advantage of non-mandatory exercises.

ANNEX A

Bibliography: Guidance

Military Aid to the Civil Community: A Pamphlet for the Guidance of Civil Authorities and Organisations
Ministry of Defence May, 1989, third edition: Ac60421

Arrangements for Responding to Nuclear Emergencies
Health and Safety Executive: HMSO (ISBN 0 11 885525 5). 1990

Survivors and the Media
Ann Shearer (Broadcasting Standards Council Monograph): John Libbey and Company Ltd. (ISBN No 0861963326) 1991

Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazard Regulations 1984 Further Guidance on Emergency Plans HS(G)25
Health and Safety Executive: HMSO (ISBN 0 11 883831 8). 1985

A Guide to the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazard Regulations 1984
Health and Safety Executive: HMSO (ISBN 0 11 885579 4). 1990

The Responses of the Faith Communities to Major Emergencies: Some Guidelines: Board of National Mission of The Church of Scotland and The General Synod of the Church of England Board for Social Responsibility.

Available from The Scottish Executive Emergency Planning Branch: Tel (0131) 244 2184

Dealing With Fatalities During Disaster: Scottish Office version. 1995

Available from The Scottish Executive Emergency Planning Branch: Tel (0131) 244 2184

Counselling and Support Services for People Involved in Major Disasters: Scottish Office Version. 1991

Available from The Scottish Executive Emergency Planning Branch: Tel (0131) 244 2184

Post Crash Management Procedures: Scottish Office Version. 1997

Available from The Scottish Executive Emergency Planning Branch: Tel (0131) 244 2184

Bibliography: Legislation

The Civil Defence Act 1948

The Civil Defence (Fire Services) (Scotland) Regulations 1949 (SI 1949/2167)

The Civil Defence (Grant) (Scotland) Regulations 1953 (SI 1953/1804)

The Civil Defence (Grant) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1987 (SI 1987/677)

The Civil Defence (General/Local Authority Functions) (Scotland) Regulations 1993 (SI 1993/1812)

The Local Government (Transitional and consequential provisions and revocations) (Scotland) Order 1996 (SI 1996 739 (S.72))