



# LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL



# MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN



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**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL**

# **MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN**

**Version 12**

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## Section 1

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### Introduction to Plan

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A Major Emergency is any event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the Principal Emergency Services in the area in which the event occurs, and requires the activation of specific additional procedures and the mobilisation of additional resources to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response.

The development of the Major Emergency Plan (MEP) for Laois has been the focus of the Major Emergency Management Committee within Laois since September 2006. The primary objective of the Major Emergency Plan is to ensure that the organisation responds in an efficient and effective manner to any major emergency which may occur within its operational area. It is also important to recognise the need for effective inter-agency cooperation during the response and this is also catered for in the plan.

The plan for Laois County Council recognises the responsibilities of all sections and personnel within the County Council's structure in responding to a major emergency and providing relief to the effected local communities.

The plan will be continually reviewed to keep pace with the changing and dynamic times we live in and to ensure we learn from other events in Ireland and overseas.

This plan will enable Laois County Council to fulfil our commitments locally, regionally and nationally in the area of Major Emergency Planning. The plan will integrate with those of our Colleagues in the other Principal Response Agencies, namely; An Garda Síochána and The Health Services Executive.

The Plan therefore provides for the collective preparedness by the Principal Response Agencies so as to ensure a prompt and effective co-ordinated response to a Major Emergency.

Signed:

  
**John Mulholland**  
Chief Executive  
Laois County Council

## 1.2 Preparation of Major Emergency Plan

The Major Emergency Plan for Laois County Council has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government and is consistent with the Government issued document 'A Framework for Major Emergency Management' 2006. The Plan should therefore be read in conjunction with this Framework. The purpose of this Plan is to put in place arrangements that will enable the three Principal Response Agencies, (An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities) to co-ordinate their efforts whenever a major emergency occurs.

The systems approach to Major Emergency Management involves a continuous cycle of activity. The principal elements of the systems approach are:

- Hazard Analysis/ Risk Assessment
- Mitigation/ Risk Management
- Planning and Preparedness
- Co-ordinated Response
- Recovery.



Fig. 1.0 Five Stage Emergency Management Paradigm

## 1.3 The objectives of the Major Emergency Plan;

The objectives of the Plan are to protect life and property, to minimise disruption to the functional area and to provide immediate support to those affected. To achieve this objective, the Plan sets out the basis for a co-ordinated response to a major emergency and lays down the different roles and functions to be performed by the authority and the Principal Response Agencies. Laois County Council aims to carry out its objectives in a Major Emergency by offering:

- Protection and care of the public at times of vulnerability
- Clear leadership in times of crisis
- Early and appropriate response
- Efficient and co-ordinated operations
- Realistic and rational approach, capable of being delivered
- Transparent systems
- Harnessing community spirit
- The ethos of self-protection
- Maintenance of essential services
- Safe working systems.



#### **1.4 The scope of the Plan.**

The Plan is designed primarily to provide for the protection, support and welfare of the public in times of emergency. The plan therefore provides for a co-ordinated inter-agency response to an emergency which is beyond the normal capabilities of the principal emergency services in the area in which the event.

#### **1.5 The relationship / inter-operability of the Major Emergency Plan with other emergency plans.**

The Plan should be read in conjunction with other PRA emergency plans. Each relevant department within the Local Authority will maintain their own Emergency Section Response Plans and Sub Plans and this plan is fully inter-operable with those plans during a Major Emergency. The plan is also fully inter-operable other major emergency plans (which will be activated during a crisis) such as those within the HSE and An Garda Síochána.

#### **1.6 The language/terminology of the Plan;**

In situations where different organisations are working together, they need a common vocabulary to enable them to communicate effectively. This Plan provides for the use of common terminology and a full set of relevant terms is provided in Appendix L. This Appendix also provides a list of acronyms used in this document.

#### **1.7 The distribution of the Plan**

A copy of the plan will be posted on the intranet for all staff to read. Copies of the plan will also be distributed to all persons and Agencies named in the distribution list provided in Appendix M.

#### **1.8 Reviewed/Update of the Plan**

The Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. If deemed necessary, the Plan may be updated / reviewed after each exercise or Major Emergency activation.

#### **1.9 Public access to the Plan**

The Major Emergency Plan will be available to the public in hard copy format at the Reception Desk in County Hall, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. A copy of the plan will also be posted on Laois County Council's public website on [www.laois.ie](http://www.laois.ie) . All details of a confidential nature will be omitted from copies accessible to members of the public.



# County Council and its Functional Area

## 2.1 Council's functions and response capability

This Plan applies to the functional area of Laois County Council. The Functions undertaken by Laois County Council are listed in Appendix J

## 2.2 Boundaries and characteristics of County Laois

Laois is an inland county in the south midlands of Ireland covering an area of 171,990 hectares, which equates to 2.4% of the national landmass. Occupying a strategic position near the centre of the country, Co. Laois is land locked and shares borders with five adjoining counties - Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary and Offaly. (see Fig 2.1 below.)



Fig 2.0

### Population details

<b>Laos</b>	<b>84,697</b>
Adjacent Counties	
Tipperary	159,553
Kilkenny	99,232
Carlow	56,932
Offaly	77,961
Kildare	222,504



Fig 2.1  
(See Appendix O for Full Scale Figure)

## 2.3 Partner Principal Response Agencies and their assigned functions

The other agencies designated by the Government to respond to major emergencies are:

- An Garda Síochána
- Health Service Executive

The Functions of these Response Agencies may be found in Appendix J.

### 2.4.1 The Region to which the Council Belongs and the areas from which it may receive mutual aid (or may contribute aid to)

There are eight regions for Major Emergency Management in Ireland. Laois forms part of the Midlands Region along with Counties Offaly, Longford and Westmeath (see Fig 2.2)

Each Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of his/her individual Principal Response Agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended, support is obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring Principal Response Agencies.

Under certain specific circumstances, regional level major emergencies may be declared. This will provide for mutual aid, support and co-ordination facilities to be activated.

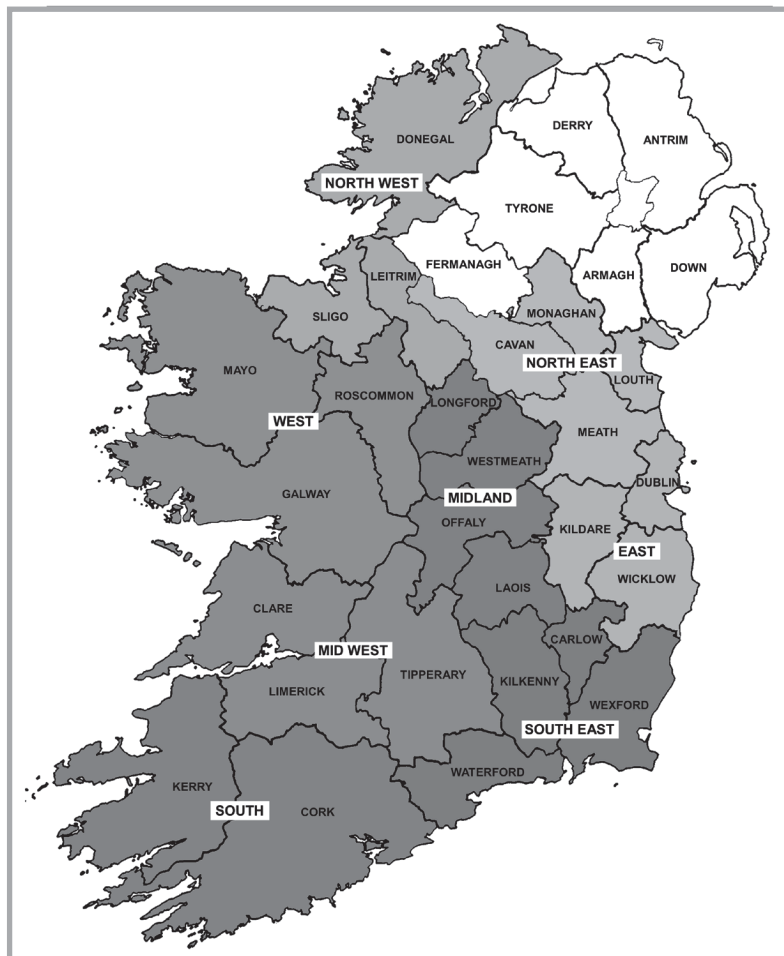


Fig. 2.2



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## Risk Assessment for the Area

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### **3.1 History of area in terms of emergency events**

Laois County Council has yet to have an incident which necessitated the activation of the Major Emergency Plan.

### **3.2 The general and specific risks that may be faced locally and regionally**

A number of Scenarios were selected by Laois County Council's Major Emergency Development Committee upon which preparedness is based.

### **3.3 Scenarios selected as exemplars on which preparedness is based.**

The following List has been produced for the Midlands Region following examination of the Risk Assessments prepared by each Local Authority in the region.

- |                                      |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| • Storm / Severe Gales               | • Transportation incident involving Hazardous Materials | • Bacteria/Protozoan/ Chemicals get into the water supply or food chain and cause pollution to people.        |
| • Severe Ice/Cold                    | • Fire in Building containing large number of people    | • Terrorism   |
| • Flooding                           | • Building Collapse                                     | • Pandemic caused by communicable disease such as influenza or animal viral spread such as Avian Flu / Ebola. |
| • Heat Wave/ Drought                 | • Gas Pipeline Explosion                                | • Large Crowd Event   |
| • Large Forest Fire                  | • Fire / Explosion/Hazmat Industrial Incident           |   |
| • Multi-Vehicle RTC                  |   |   |
| • Rail Crash/Incident                |   |   |
| • Aircraft Collision Mid-Air         |   |   |
| • Structural Fail/Collapse of Bridge |   |   |

### **3.4 Risk reduction strategies.**

The Risk Assessment process resulted in a schedule of Hazards. Risk management / mitigation / reduction strategies are examined where their elimination is not feasible. The risk mitigation measures which are either in place or are required are recorded in Parts 5 and 6 of the Risk Assessment process for each Hazard considered.

The Risk Assessment process comprises four stages as outlined in the Framework document

1. Establishing the context
2. Hazard Identification
3. Risk Assessment
4. Recording potential hazards on a risk matrix

### **3.5 Site/event specific emergency plans and links between these plans and the Major Emergency Plan**

There are currently no Event Plans prepared for what are relatively small scale local festivals held at temporary venues around the County.

All larger scale events, which require a Licence prior to their commencement, will be subject to Site/Event Specific Management plans.

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## Resources For Emergency Response

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### 4.1 Structure / resources / services of the Council

### 4.2 Voluntary Staffing Arrangements (call-in of off-duty staff)

Laois County Fire and Rescue Service will mobilise in accordance with its pre determined attendance procedures. All other County Council staff requested to carry out functions in relation to a Major Emergency will be acting on a voluntary basis subject to their availability.

All Laois County Council staff members who are part of the Local Co-ordination Group, Crisis Management Team and Controller of Operation's Teams will be mobilised in accordance with Appendix A.

### 4.3 Resources of the Council and how they are matched to the functions assigned to it.

Laois County Council have identified, matched and formally nominated individuals and alternates to key roles to enable the Authority to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in this Plan.

Support teams have been put in place for key roles and Operational Protocols have been prepared, setting out the arrangements which will enable the Authority's support teams to be mobilised and function in accordance with the arrangements set out in this Plan.

The Holders of key roles are listed in Appendix C

#### **4.4 Other agencies that may be mobilised to assist the Council**

The following agencies may be utilised to assist the County Council in a Major Emergency;

- The Defence Forces (see Appendix Y)
- Civil Defence
- The Irish Red Cross
- The Voluntary Emergency Services Sector
- The community affected
- Utilities
- The private sector
- See Appendices E, F, G, H and Y

Additionally, see Section 7.10 of this Plan for Mobilisation procedures.

#### **4.4.1 Civil Defence**

Civil Defence is a body of volunteers trained in the disciplines of First Aid, rescue, fire, welfare, water based activities, search and recovery. A call out system is in place in the event of an emergency however a response is subject to the availability of Volunteers. (See *Appendix E, Section 7.10 and Section 8 for more details*)

#### **4.4.2 The Defence Forces**

The Defence Forces can provide a significant support role in a major emergency response. However, there are constraints and limitations and their involvement has to be pre-planned through the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Consequently, assumptions should not be made regarding the availability of Defence Forces resources to respond to a Major Emergency.

It is recognised that assistance requested from the Defence Forces will be either in Aid to the Civil Power (An Garda Síochána), primarily an armed response or in Aid to the Civil Authority (Local Authority or Health Service Executive) unarmed response. (see *Appendix Y for more details*)

#### **4.4.3 The Irish Red Cross**

The Irish Red Cross is established and regulated under the Red Cross Acts, 1938-54. These statutes define a role for the Irish Red Cross as an auxiliary to the state authorities in time of emergency and also provide a specific mandate to assist the medical services of the Irish Defence Forces in time of armed conflict. The main relationship with the principal response agencies in a major emergency response is as an auxiliary resource to the ambulance services. Subsidiary search and rescue and in-shore rescue units of the Irish Red Cross support An Garda Síochána and the Irish Coast Guard. (See *Appendix F, Section 7.10 and section 8 for more details*)

#### **4.4.4 Voluntary Emergency Services Sector**

Other Voluntary Emergency Services in the area include:

- Order of Malta Ireland.
- St. John Ambulance Service.

#### **4.4.5 The Community Affected**

It is recognised that communities that are empowered to be part of the response to a disaster, rather than allowing themselves to be simply victims of it, are more likely to recover and to restore normality quickly, with fewer long-term consequences.

At an early stage the On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, should determine if ongoing assistance is required from “casual volunteers” within the community, so that An Garda Síochána cordoning arrangements can take account of this.

#### **4.4.6 Utilities**

Utilities are frequently involved in the response to emergencies, usually to assist the Principal Response Agencies in making situations safe. They may also be directly involved in restoring their own services, (e.g. electricity supply in the aftermath of a storm).

It is important that there is close co-ordination between the principal response agencies and utilities involved in, or affected, by an emergency. Utilities operate under their own legislative and regulatory frameworks but, during the response to an emergency, they need to liaise with the On-Site Co-ordinator. It is also recommended that representatives of individual utilities on site should be invited to provide a representative for the On-Site Co-ordination Group. It is recommended that individual utilities be invited to attend and advise the Local Co-ordination Group.

#### **4.4.7 Private Sector**

Private sector organisations may be involved in a Major Emergency situation in two ways. They may be involved through ownership of the site where the emergency has occurred or through ownership of some element involved in the emergency (e.g. an aircraft, bus, factory, etc). They may also be called on to assist in the response to a Major Emergency by providing specialist services and equipment, which would not normally be held or available within the Principal Response Agencies. (See Appendix F for contact details)

#### **4.5 Mutual-aid from Neighbouring Authorities**

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may request assistance from a neighboring County or declare a Regional Level Emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination (see Section 9). The regions for response purposes need not coincide necessarily with the pre-determined regions for preparedness. This may occur where the nature of an emergency is such that:

- the resources available in the local area where the incident happens do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner; or
- the consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area; or
- the incident(s) is spread across more than one Local Authority or
- the incident occurs at or close to a boundary of several of the Principal Response Agencies.

#### **4.6 Regional level of co-ordinated response**

The Lead Agency, which has declared the regional level emergency, will convene and chair the Regional Co-ordination Group.  
The method of operation of a Regional Co-ordination Centre will be similar to the Local Co-ordination Centre.

#### **4.7 Arrangements for seeking National/International assistance**

If the incident requires more than the resources available on a regional level the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may request National/International assistance. See Section 10.1 for declaring a National Major Emergency.





### **5.1 Incorporation of Major Emergency Management into the Council's business planning process.**

The development of Laois County Council's Major Emergency Plan is part of an emergency management programme within the Local Authority to ensure that all necessary arrangements (systems, people and resources) are in place to discharge the functions assigned to it. The Plan therefore does not stand alone but is in fact incorporated into the Council's management programme. This management programme is designed to maintain a continuous level of preparedness within the County.

### **5.2 Assignment of Responsibility**

The Chief Executive is responsible for all Major Emergency Management arrangements and preparedness through the relevant Director of Service. A Fire Officer has been appointed with specific responsibility for Major Emergency Management (MEM) who works under the direction of the Chief Fire Officer and is responsible for developing and updating major emergency plans. In respect of the inter-agency preparedness it is the responsibility of the relevant Director of Services, in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officer, to ensure that the Local Authority's plans are interoperable with the other PRA's.

### **5.3 Management Programme to discharge the functions assigned by the Framework.**

Progress on the Major Emergency Management Programme will be reviewed regularly at Laois County Council's Major Emergency Management Committee (M.E.M.C) meetings.

### **5.4 Key roles identified in the Plan**

Laois County Council has nominated individuals and alternates to the key roles to enable it to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in this Major Emergency Plan and Framework Documents. The list of persons nominated for Key Roles (and their Deputies) can be found in Appendix C.

#### **5.5 Support teams for key roles**

The Key Role appointment holders listed in Appendix C have identified personnel to form his/her support teams, which will help the Key Role appointment holder initiate an effective response to a Major Emergency. All Laois County Council staff members who are part of the Local Co-ordination Group, Crisis Management Team and Controller of Operations Teams are listed in Appendix C

#### **5.6 Staff management programme**

The tasks arising from the major emergency management arrangements involve a significant level of training, both within Laois County Council and jointly with our regional partners. In parallel with risk assessment and mitigation processes and the preparation of the Major Emergency Plan, Laois County Council will maintain an internal programme to ensure its level of preparedness, so that in a major emergency it will be in a position to respond in an efficient and effective manner and discharge the assigned functions. (as set out in appendix J of this Plan)

#### **5.7 Training programme for those staff holding key roles**

The staff nominated for the Key Roles, and their support teams identified, have been provided with training which is specifically designed to develop their skills and abilities with regard to their roles for Major Emergency Management at both inter-agency and local level.

#### **5.8 Internal exercise programme**

Personnel involved in the Major Emergency Plan may be required to participate in exercises in order to maintain their skills in relation to Major Emergency Management. This will ensure effective co-operation between agencies during a Major Emergency. The exercise programme will follow the guidelines issued by the Department.

#### **5.9 Joint/inter-agency training and exercise programmes with partner agencies in the Major Emergency Region.**

Personnel involved in the Major Emergency Plan may be required to participate in inter-agency training and exercises in order to ensure effective co-operation between agencies during a Major Emergency. This will be co-ordinated by the Midlands Regional Working Group (MRWG)

#### **5.10 Allocation of specific resources including a budget for preparedness**

Laois County Council will provide a budget for major emergency preparedness, which reflects the expenditure required to meet the costs of implementing both internal preparedness, as well as the Council's contribution to the regional level inter-agency preparedness.

### **5.11 Procurement and use of resources**

It may be necessary to procure goods or services immediately to deal with the emergency. The arrangements to authorise procurement and use of resources (including engaging third parties) to assist in response to major emergencies are governed by the Local Government Act.

Designated officers, including Controllers of Operations, are authorised to procure such goods or services and deploy resources necessary to deal with the situation when a major emergency is declared and where the normal procurement processes are not relevant or applicable.

### **5.12 Council's annual appraisal of preparedness**

Laois County Council carries out, and documents, an annual internal appraisal of its preparedness for major emergency response. It is then sent for external appraisal to the Department in accordance with the Department's Appraisal Document.

An annual appraisal of the Midlands Regional level preparedness shall also be documented, again in accordance with the Department's Appraisal Document.

### **5.13 Steps taken to inform the public as to what action they should take in the event of an Emergency**

There may be situations where Laois County Council needs to provide timely and accurate information directly to the public on an emergency situation where members of the public may perceive themselves, and their families, to be at risk and are seeking information on actions which they can take to protect themselves and their families.

The Local Co-ordination Group will take over the task of co-ordinating the provision of information to the public as soon as it meets. This activity should be co-ordinated by the lead agency. The Local Co-ordination Group may establish a sub-group for this purpose and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available. This may include the use of dedicated "help-lines", webpages, social media, automatic text messaging, as well as through liaison with the media (as set out in Appendix Z).

*Note: The severe weather hotline number may be considered in this case – see Appendix U for more information.*



## The Generic Command, Control and Co-ordination Systems

### 6.1 Command arrangements:

The Chief Executive of Laois County Council is responsible for the Local Authority's major emergency management arrangements and preparedness, as well as the effectiveness of the Council's response to any major emergency which occurs in its functional area.

Laois County Council will exercise command over its own resources in accordance with its normal command structure, systems and arrangements. At the site of an emergency Laois County Council will additionally exercise control over any additional resources that the Local Authority mobilises to the site (with the exception of the other PRAs)

### 6.2 Control arrangements:

Laois County Council shall appoint a Controller of Operations at the site (or at each site) of the emergency. The officer in command of the initial response of each principal emergency service should be the Principal Response Agency's Controller of Operations until relieved through the agency's pre-determined process. (See *Appendix C.*)

#### 6.2.1 Control of all services/sections of the Council which respond.

##### Controller of Operations

The Controller of Operations is empowered to make all decisions relating to his/her agency's functions, but must take account of decisions of the On-Site Co-ordination Group in so doing.

See Appendix K for mandates of the following:

- On Site Co-ordinator
- Controller of Operations
- Local Co-ordination Group

##### Crisis Management Team (No Mandates)

The members of the Crisis Management Team as designated in Appendix C will meet at County Hall, Portlaoise. The use of Crisis Management Teams within each of the Principal Response Agencies facilitates the mobilisation of senior staff to deal with the crisis, in light of the evolving situation, rather than leaving multiple roles to a small number of individuals who hold key positions. In this way, the objectives of prioritising and managing a protracted crisis can be dealt with effectively, while keeping the day-to-day business running.

The Crisis Management Team provides support to the Principal Response Agency's representative at the Local Co-ordination Group, supports their own Controller of Operations on site and maintains the agency's normal day-to-day services that the community requires.

## **6.2.2 Control of external organisations / agencies**

There are a number of organisations and agencies, which may be called on to assist the Principal Response Agencies in responding to major emergencies. The arrangements for this assistance should be agreed with each agency.

At the site of an emergency, Laois County Council will exercise control over not only its own services but any additional services (other than the Principal Response Agencies) which the County Council mobilises to the site.

## **6.2.3 Support arrangements for the Control function.**

The Crisis Management Team provides support to the Principal Response Agency's representative at the Local Co-ordination Group, supports their own Controller of Operations on site and maintains the agency's normal day -to-day services.

Additionally, Laois County Council will have trained Information Management Officers at the scene and at the co-ordination centre to support the work of the On-Site Co-ordinator and the Local Co-ordination Teams. *(See appendix C and P.)*

## **6.3 Co-ordination Arrangements**

The co-ordination of the efforts of all services is recognised as a vital element in successful response to major emergencies so that the combined result is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.

### **6.3.1 Lead Agency**

The concept of the Lead Agency is accepted as the method for establishing which Agency has initial responsibility for Coordination of all Services at the site of a Major Emergency. The predetermined and default agencies for different types of emergencies are contained within Appendix I of this Plan and Appendix F7 of The Framework for Major Emergency Management (Appendices Document)

### **6.3.2 On Site Co-ordination and Support Teams**

The primary mechanism used to deliver co-ordination on site is the arrangement for an 'On-Site Co-ordinator', provided by the Lead Agency. As soon as they meet, the three Controllers of Operations should determine which is the Lead Agency and thereby establishing the On-Site Co-ordinator. This person is tasked with the role of coordinating the activities of all agencies responding to the emergency. *(See Appendix K)*

The On-Site Co-ordinator will chair the 'On -Site Co-ordinating Group'. In addition to the On-Site Co-ordinator, this group should comprise the Controllers Of Operations of the other two Agencies, Information Management Officers, a Media Liaison Officer, Action Management Officers and, where considered appropriate, representatives of other agencies and specialists. The On-Site Co-ordinator should determine which facilities should be used as the On-Site Co-ordination Centre. (If necessary, Laois County Council can provide On Site facilities, and all associated communications and equipment, to allow the On Site Co -ordination team to function at the site of the Emergency.) *(See Appendix D and Q for more information)*

### **6.3.3 Co-ordination function at the Local / Regional Co-ordination Centres**

The Local Co-ordination Centre is located at County Hall, Portlaoise. In general, it is the function of the Local Co-ordination Group to provide strategic level management for the immediate, medium and long-term consequences of the incident.

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a Regional Level Emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. The key provision in ensuring co-ordination of the extended response is the activation of a 'Regional Coordination Group'. The primary function of the Regional Co-ordination Group is to maintain co-ordination of the Principal Response Agencies involved from the extended 'response region'. If the Local Authority is the Lead Agency which has declared the regional level emergency, they will convene and chair the Regional Co-ordination Group. Any one of the nominated Local Coordination Centres may be used as the Regional Coordination Center.

### **6.3.4 Co-ordination for other specific circumstances.**

Where there is ambiguity regarding the On-site Coordinator, the three Controllers of Operations will meet and decide who the On-site Coordinator is for the Incident. If considered necessary, representatives and specialist advisors of other agencies can meet with the On-site Coordination team to aid in decision-making.(see appendix I for more information)

#### **6.3.4.1 Mutual aid and regional level co-ordination.**

Each Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of his/her individual Principal Response Agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended, support is obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring Principal Response Agencies.

#### **6.3.4.2 Incidents occurring on the Council's boundaries**

In certain situations, e.g. where an emergency affects an extensive area or occurs near the borders of Divisions of An Garda Síochána or areas of the Health Service Executive or of the Local Authorities, there may be responses from multiple units of the Principal Response Agency. There should be only one Controller of Operations for each of the three PRA and it is necessary to determine from which unit of the Principal Response Agency the Controller of Operations should come.

In the case of Local Authorities, which are statutorily empowered in respect of their functional areas, procedures for resolving such issues may already be set out in what are referred to as Section 85 agreements. Where they are not so covered and the issue cannot be resolved quickly in discussion between the responding officers of the different units of those services, the Local Authority Controller of Operations should be the designated person from the Local Authority whose rostered Senior Fire Officer was first to attend the incident.

### 6.3.4.3 Multi-site or wide area emergencies

Multi-site or wide area emergencies may require the setting up of multiple Local Co-Ordination Groups. During such an emergency each Local Co-ordination Group will be in contact with the lead Government Department and, in such a situation, the decision on whether the activities of a number of Local Co-ordination Groups should be co-ordinated via a Regional Co-ordination Centre or via the lead Government Department in light of the prevailing circumstances.

### 6.3.4.4 Links with National Emergency Plans.

National Bodies, operating in accordance with National Emergency Plans, may call upon the Principal Response Agencies to assist in responding to, or to perform their normal functions/ roles arising from, a National Level Emergency. Therefore, the Laois Major Emergency Plan will operate as an integral part of any National Plans developed for scenarios affecting the population on a National Level

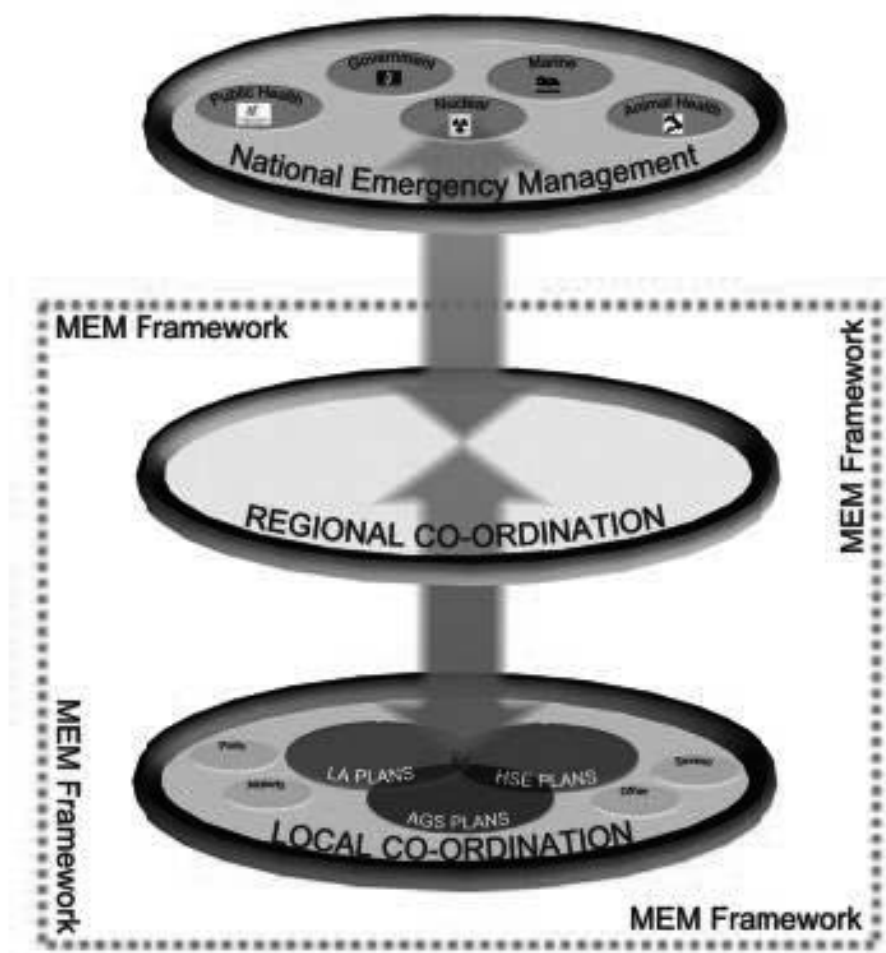


Figure 6.0  
Linking Major Emergency Plans with  
National Plans and other Plans

#### **6.3.4.5 Links with National Government**

In every situation where a Major Emergency is declared, each Principal Response Agency should inform its parent Department of the declaration, as part of that agency's Mobilisation procedure (see Appendix A of this Plan for additional Information). The three parent Departments should consult and agree, on the basis of available information, which Government Department will be designated as Lead Department.

When designated, the Lead Government Department will be responsible for activating its own internal emergency / crisis management arrangements and making contact with the relevant Local Co-ordination Group (or Regional Co-ordination Group, if appropriate).

The arrangements for linking the local response to a major emergency with National Level Co-ordination arise from what might be termed a 'bottom up' situation. Where one of the National Emergency Plans is activated, a 'top-down' connection may be put in place, i.e. the Regional and Local Co-ordination Centres are requested to become operational by the Lead Department. The configuration of Regional and Local Co-ordination Centres to be activated under this provision should be determined in light of the circumstances warranting the activation.



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## The Common Elements of Response

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### 7.1 Activating the Major Emergency Plan

The Major Emergency Plan should be activated by whichever of the following Agencies first becomes aware of the Major Emergency:

- Laois County Council
- An Garda Síochána
- Health Service Executive

#### 7.1.1 Declaring a Major Emergency

In order that an incident is optimally managed, it is vital that the highest-ranking member of each of the first Emergency Services to arrive on site carries out a situation appraisal. It is their task to survey the site and accumulate all available information, which may be used to decide if a Major Emergency should be declared or not.

Senior Officers of the County Council will be designated by the Chief Executive as having the responsibility to declare a Major Emergency. (The names of those officers are contained in Appendix B)

#### 7.1.2 Procedures for Declaring the Major Emergency

A Major Emergency should be declared in the following format:

*This is .....(name, rank and service).....  
A.....(type of incident).....has occurred/is imminent  
at.....(location).....  
As an Authorised Officer, I declare that a major emergency exists.  
Please activate the mobilisation arrangements in the Laois County  
Council Major Emergency Plan*

After the declaration is made, the officer should then use the mnemonic **METHANE** to structure and deliver an information message.

The **METHANE** mnemonic is as follows;

- M** Major Emergency Declared
- E** Exact location of the emergency
- T** Type of emergency, e.g. transport, chemical, fire etc.
- H** Hazards present and potential
- A** Access/egress routes
- N** Number and types of casualties
- E** Emergency services present and required

The other two Principal Response Agencies involved will be informed that the County Council's Major Emergency Plan is being activated. (See Appendix A for full details.)

## **7.2. Initial Mobilisation**

Laois County Council's initial Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure will be implemented immediately on notification to the Eastern Region Control Centre (E.R.C.C.) of the declaration of a Major Emergency. (See Appendix A and Appendix C)

In some situations, there may be an early warning of an impending emergency. Mobilisation within Laois County Council may include moving to a standby/alert stage for some of its services or specific individuals until the situation becomes clearer.

There may also be circumstances where the resources or expertise of agencies other than the Principal Response Agencies will be required. In these situations the relevant arrangements outlined in the Major Emergency Plan will be invoked. No third party should respond to the site of a Major Emergency unless mobilised by one of the Principal Response Agencies through an agreed procedure.

### **7.2.1 Mobilisation of resources**

When this plan has been activated, Laois County Council shall respond in accordance with pre-determined arrangements as detailed within Appendix A and Appendix C.

### **7.3.1 Command, Control and Communication Centre(s)**

The activation of the Plan by the Eastern Regional Control Centre will ensure that the Fire Service Predetermined Attendance (see Appendix A) will be activated and instigate initial contact with selected Senior Managers of the County Council.

All members of the Local Co-ordination, Crisis management and Controller of Operations Teams will also be contacted in accordance with procedures outlined within Appendix A and Appendix C.

## **7.4. Co-ordination Centres**

### **7.4.1 Support arrangements for the On-Site Co-ordination**

An on-site co-ordination centre will be deployed in the event of a Major Emergency for on-site operational support and command. This may be a dedicated vehicle, tent or an adjacent building that will accommodate all Principle Responses Agencies (see Appendix D and Q for more information)

### **7.4.2 The County Council's Crisis Management Team (No Mandates)**

The Crisis Management Team provides support to the Principal Response Agency's representative at the Local Co-ordination Group, supports their own Controller of Operations on site and maintains the Council's normal day-to-day services that the community requires.

### 7.4.3 Local Co-ordination Centre

The pre-determined Local Co-ordination Centre for Laois is in Council Hall, Portlaoise. The centre, illustrated below, has the following characteristics.

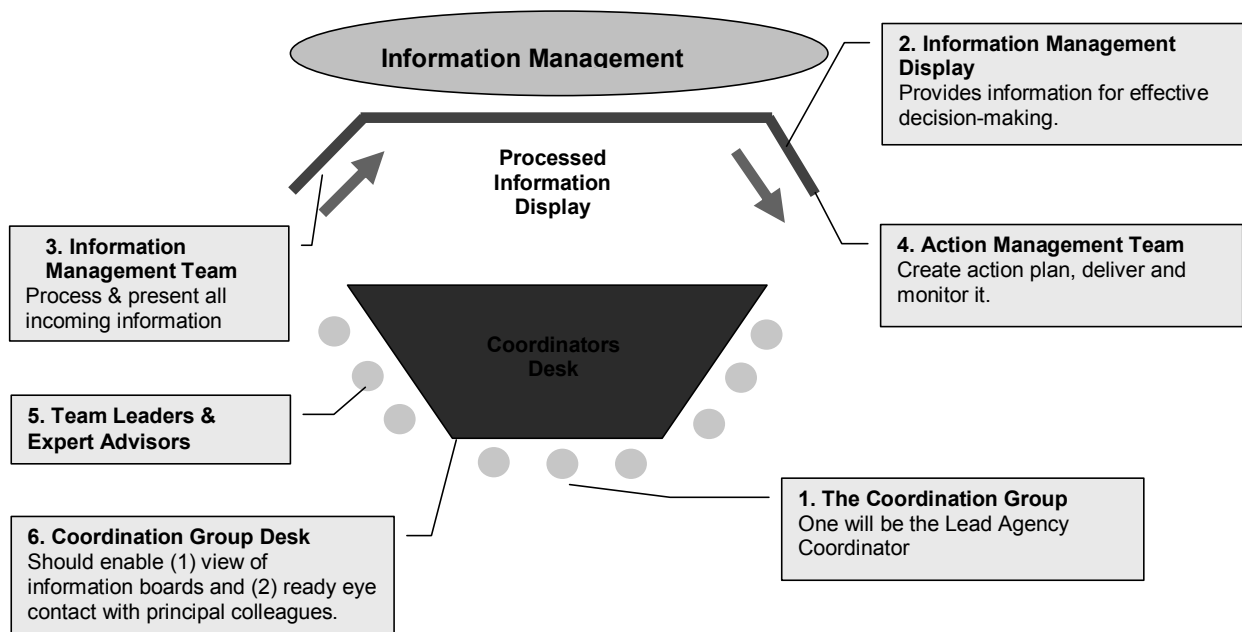


Fig. 7.0 Generic Coordination Centre

### 7.4.4 Regional Co-ordination Centre(s)

The Local Coordination Centres will have the capacity to act as Regional Coordination Centres should the Major Emergency be scaled up to a Regional Level. (Refer to Section 9 for more details.)

### 7.4.5 Information managers and support arrangements

Once safe to do so, Laois County Council will mobilise trained Information Management Officers to the scene to support the work of the On-Site Co-ordinator. Additionally, Information Management Officers will be mobilised to the Co-ordination Centres, to support the Crisis Management Team and the chairs of the Local and Regional Co-ordination Groups. The Information Management Officer provides the principal conduit of information exchange between co-ordination centres and between these centres and the outside world. This role is key to the success of the information management process. Information Managers for Laois County Council are listed in

Appendix C. (additionally, see appendix P for more Information management details)

A common information management system will be used by all Co-ordination Centres, from on-site upwards, through Local and Regional and on to National Co-ordination levels, where appropriate.

## **7.5. Communications Facilities**

### **7.5.1 Communications systems (including protocols and procedures.)**

The Fire Service relies on technical communication facilities to enable it to function, both at the site and between the site and its control centre. These systems use Tetra Radios on the National Digital Radio Network for communication between vehicles and communication centres and hand-portable radio (UHF) for communication on site.

Communication systems serve command structures within services and it is neither necessary nor desirable that there is inter-agency radio communication at all levels. However, it is critical that robust arrangements for inter-agency communication on site(s) is maintained at Controller of Operations level as a minimum.

It is also crucial that there are appropriate communications links between different elements of the Site Management, as described in Section 7.9.

Facilities are also required to provide resilient communications between sites and Local Co-ordination Centres.

Laois County Council's Communications will be by way of:

- TETRA radios
- UHF radios.
- Mobile Phones.
- Landlines.
- Email.
- See Appendix D for all relevant information

### **7.5.2 Inter-agency communication on site**

Inter-agency communications on site shall be by way of hand portable radios, provided by the Fire Service. The distribution of the hand portable radios will be at the discretion of the On-site Co-ordinator, subject to a minimum of 1 no. hand portable radio issued to each of the Controllers of Operations or their designated command support staff.

**7.5.3 Communications between site and coordination centres**

All communication between On-site Co-ordination and the Local Co-ordination shall pass between the Information Management Officers at the scene and at the co-ordination centres. (see Appendix D and Appendix P)

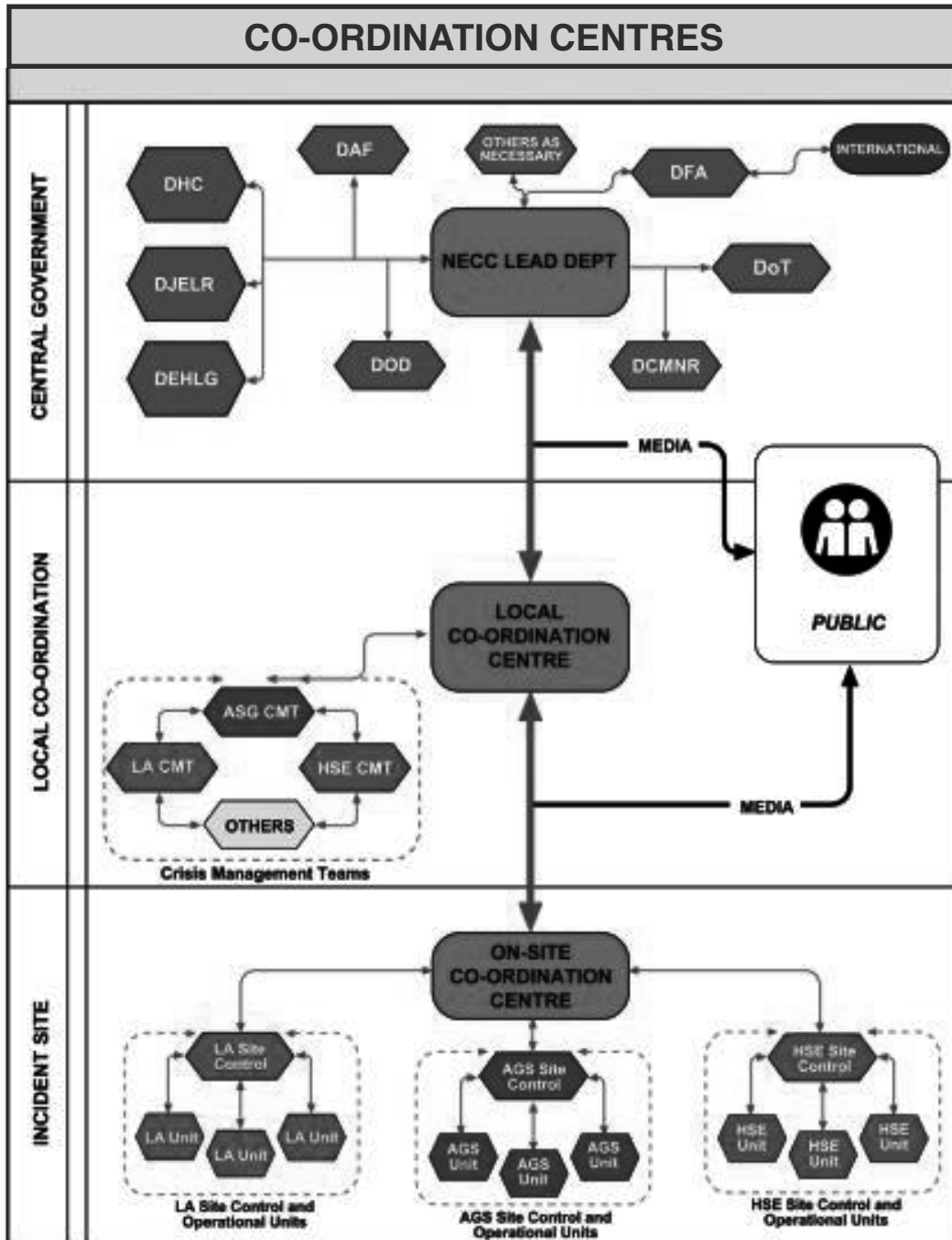


Fig 7.1: Communications

(See Appendix L for Acronym information)

## **7.6. Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles**

### **7.6.1 Determination of the Lead Agency**

The Framework for Major Emergency Management provides that one of the three Principle Response Agencies will be designated as the Lead Agency for any Major Emergency and thereby will assume responsibility for leading co-ordination. The Lead Agency has both the responsibility and mandate for the co-ordination function. (See Section 6.3.1 and Appendix I of this Plan for further details)

### **7.6.2 Reviewing and Transfer of the Lead Agency**

The Lead Agency role may change over time to reflect the changing circumstances of the emergency. Ownership of the Lead Agency should be reviewed at appropriate stages of the Major Emergency.

All changes in Lead Agency designation emanating from the site, and the timing thereof, will be by agreement of the three Controllers of Operations at the site and should be communicated as per the initial determination.- (See Section 6.3.1 and Appendix I of this Plan for further details.)

### **7.6.3 Council's co-ordination function as the "Lead Agency"**

In the event of Laois County Council being assigned the Lead Agency role, it will be assigned the responsibility for the Co-ordination function (in addition to its own functions) and it should lead all of the co-ordination activity associated with the emergency both on-site and off-site, and make every effort to achieve a high level of co-ordination.

The functions of the Lead Agency for any emergency include:

- Ensuring involvement of the three Principal Response Agencies and the Principal Emergency Services in sharing information on the nature of the emergency situation
- Ensuring involvement of the range of organisations (other than Principal Response Agencies) who may be requested to respond in co-ordination activities and arrangements
- Ensuring that mandated co-ordination decisions are made promptly and communicated to all involved
- Ensuring that site management issues are addressed and decided;
- Ensuring that public information messages and media briefings are co-ordinated and implemented
- Ensuring that pre-arranged communications (technical) links are put in place and operating
- Operating the generic information management systems;
- Ensuring that the ownership of the Lead Agency role is reviewed, and modified as appropriate
- Ensuring that all aspects of the management of the incident are dealt with before the response is stood down

- Ensuring that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the emergency after it is closed down, and circulated (first as a draft) to the other services which attended

## **7.7 Public Information**

### **7.7.1 Early warning and special public warning arrangements**

In certain situations, it may be crucial for the County Council to provide timely and accurate information directly to the public on an emergency situation. Members of the public may perceive themselves and their families to be at risk and will seek information on actions that they can take to protect themselves and their families.

Once established, the Local Co-ordination Group should manage the task of co-ordinating the provision of information to the public. This activity should be co-ordinated by the Lead Agency.

The Local Co-ordination Group may establish a sub-group for this purpose and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available. This may include the use of dedicated ‘help-lines’, web-pages, social media, automatic text messaging, as well as through liaison with the Media. (See Appendix Z for more information)

The Lead Agency may request the media to carry Public Information Notices during a Major Emergency to convey important messages, such as how individuals may help themselves and their neighbours in a particular situation.

### **7.7.2 Telephone/help line/information line contact numbers.**

Early warning and special public notices shall be relayed in the event of an emergency. The Public can be kept informed by use of the following;

- Internet service, [www.laois.ie](http://www.laois.ie)
- Local broadcasters
- Emergency helpline service  
(Additionally see 7.14.1)
- Social media

On a National level, the public shall be informed by use of the following:

- Television
- Radio
- Social media

Council Staff may be mobilised to handle telephone calls from the public. A list of personnel available for this purpose is contained within Appendix H and U

The appointed Media Liaison Officers for Laois County Council shall make arrangements to publicise the emergency telephone numbers and/or the location of public information offices. (See Appendix C and Appendix Z for Media liaison Officers contact details and Section 5.13/Appendix U for possible helpline number.)

## **7.8 The Media (see Appendix Z)**

### **7.8.1 Liaison with the media.**

The media are likely to respond quickly to any Major Emergency and a media presence at the site may extend for the duration of the incident.

Laois County Council will designate a Media Liaison Officer at the site. The activities of the Media Liaison Officers on site should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the Lead Agency. All statements to the media should be cleared with the On-Site Co-ordinator or his/her Media Liaison Officer. (See Appendix C and Appendix Z for additional details.)

Regular media briefings should be scheduled to suit television and radio broadcasts. These briefings should also be used to circulate help-line telephone numbers and necessary public information messages. (Additionally, see appendix U for possible low call help-line number)

### **7.8.2 Arrangements for media on-site.**

It is the responsibility of the Lead Agency to establish and run a Media Centre at or near the site of the emergency for use by the Principal Response Agencies in dealing with the media at the site. (See Appendix F for Supplier info e.g. Marquee, Hotels, etc.)

There shall be a Media Liaison Officer appointed at both the Onsite and Local Co-ordination Centres. The Media Liaison Officer must keep accurate and timely information on the emergency so that in consultation with the Local Co-ordination Groups:

He/She can be the point of contact for all media enquiries.

He/She can answer information queries from the general public.

He/She can obtain and provide information from/to Rest Centres, other agencies, press officers, local radio, press etc.

He/She will be responsible for setting up an information helpline.

He/She should liaise with other liaison Officers.

### **7.8.3 Media at Local and/or Regional Co-ordination centres.**

The Local/Regional Co-ordination Group should take the lead in terms of working with the media, away from the site, during a Major Emergency. As with arrangements at the site, each Principal Response Agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the Local/Regional Coordination Centre and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the Lead Agency. All statements to the media at this level should be cleared with the chair of the Local/Regional Co-ordination Group.



#### **7.8.4 Media at, or adjacent to, other locations associated with the major emergency**

In many situations media attention will move quickly away from the site to other locations, including the Local Co-ordination Centre, hospitals and mortuaries etc. The Local Co-ordination Group should take the lead in terms of working with the media, away from the site. As with arrangements at the site, each Principal Response Agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the Local Coordination Centre and the activities of these officers should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the Lead Agency. All statements to the media at this level should be cleared with the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group.

### **7.9 Site Management Arrangements**

#### **7.9.1 Development of a Site Management Plan**

The initial important task of the On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other two Controllers of Operations, is the development of a Site Management Plan. This should be in accordance with the typical Site Management Arrangements, leading to the establishment of all or some of the following, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- Inner, Outer and Traffic Cordons
- Access Control Points
- Danger Area, if appropriate
- Site Access Routes
- Principal Response Agency Control Points
- Site Control Point
- On-Site Co-ordination Centre
- Rendezvous Point/s
- Holding Areas for the different services
- Casualty Clearing Station
- Ambulance Loading Area
- Body Holding Area
- Survivor Reception Centre
- Media Centre
- Friends and Relatives Reception Centre

(See Appendix N for more details and Diagram.)

The first response vehicle from each of the Principal Emergency Service that arrives at the scene will become the Control Point of that Service until the Controller of Operations declares otherwise. It is essential for good site management that Holding Areas for each Principal Response Agency are established as early as possible. (See Appendix N)

### **7.9.2 Control of access to the Site and identification of Council Personnel**

In order to control access to a Major Emergency site, cordons will be established as quickly as possible at the site of a Major Emergency for the following reasons:

- to facilitate the operations of the emergency services and other agencies;
- to protect the public, by preventing access to dangerous areas; and
- to protect evidence and facilitate evidence recovery at the site.

Three cordons will be established. An Inner, Outer and Traffic Cordon, along with access cordon points, (see Appendix N for more information). These cordons will be established and controlled by An Garda Síochána after a decision by and agreement with the On-site Coordination Group. A Danger Area will also be declared.

All uniformed personnel, responding to the site of a Major Emergency, should wear suitable PPE including high visibility jacket, safety shoes and safety clothing. LCC Controller of Operations Staff will be required to bring suitable identification as requested as part of our mobilisation procedure.(see appendix T and C for more information)

Senior personnel who are acting in key roles, such as the On-Site Coordinator and the Controllers of Operations, will wear bibs designed and coordinated as follows:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Bib Colour</b>	<b>Wording</b>
Health Service Executive	Green and White Chequer	HSE Controller
County Council	Red and White Chequer	County Council Controller
An Garda Síochána	Blue and White Chequer	Garda Controller

When the Lead Agency has been determined, the On-Site Co-ordinator should don a distinctive bib with the words On-Site Coordinator clearly visible front and back.

All County Council personnel responding to an emergency shall wear appropriate PPE. Additionally, all County Council personnel responding to an emergency shall wear (or carry) the form of identification issued to them. Where identification is not permanently retained on the person or vehicle, it should be obtained from the County Council Holding Area. Access beyond Cordons should not be permitted in the absence of the appropriate identification. An Garda Síochána will control access through the various cordons.

### **7.9.3 Air exclusion zones**

Where the Principal Response Agencies consider it appropriate and beneficial, the On-Site Co-ordinator may request, through An Garda Síochána, that the Irish Aviation Authority declare an Air Exclusion Zone around the emergency site. When a restricted zone above and around the site is declared, it is broadcasted by means of a "Notice to Airmen"- NOTAM - from the Irish Aviation Authority.

## 7.10 Mobilising Additional Resources

### 7.10.1 Mobilising Support organisations

The Voluntary Emergency Services Sector can provide additional equipment and support in the event of a major emergency.

Voluntary Emergency Services will link to the Principal Response Agencies in accordance with the table below.

<b>Principal Response Agency</b>	<b>Linked Voluntary Emergency Service</b>
An Garda Síochána	Irish Mountain Rescue Association, Irish Cave Rescue Association, Search and Rescue Dogs, Sub-Aqua Teams, River Rescue.
Health Service Executive	Irish Red Cross, Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, St. John's Ambulance.
County Council	Civil Defence.

Each Principal Response Agency with a linked Voluntary Emergency Service is responsible for the mobilisation of that service and their integration into the overall response. The internal command of volunteer organisations resides with that organisation.

#### 7.10.1.1 Mobilisation of Civil Defence

The Civil Defence Organisation, including the various services within that organisation will be called to assist through contact with the Civil Defence Officer who is based at County Hall, Portlaoise. The Civil Defence will be mobilised to the major emergency in accordance with procedures set out in within Appendix C of this plan.

#### **7.10.1.2 Mobilisation of Defence Forces**

The Defence Forces may be called upon. (see Appendix Y)

#### **7.10.1.3 The Irish Red Cross**

The Irish Red Cross will be mobilised by the Health Services Executive.

#### **7.10.1.4 Mobilisation of Voluntary Emergency Services (VES)**

The Framework specifies that no service should mobilise/ travel to the scene of an emergency unless specifically requested to do so by the relevant PRA. The VES may be requested to provide important support services at locations other than the site of the emergency.

#### **7.10.1.5 Mobilisation of Utilities**

Utilities are frequently involved in the response to emergencies, usually to assist the Principal Response Agencies in making situations safe. They may also be directly involved in restoring their own services, for example, electricity supply in the aftermath of a storm. Utilities operate under their own legislative and regulatory frameworks but, during the response to an emergency, it is important that they are involved in the co-ordination arrangements.

#### **7.10.1.6 Mobilisation of Private Sector**

Private Sector organisations may be involved in a Major Emergency through ownership of the site where the emergency has occurred or through ownership of some element involved in the emergency (e.g. an aircraft, bus, factory, etc.) They may also be called on to assist in the response to a Major Emergency, by providing specialist services and/or equipment. Private Sector representatives and/or experts may be requested to support the work of the On-Site Co-ordination Group, the Local Co-ordination Group and/or the Regional Co-ordination Group, as appropriate. A list of experts and specialist equipment within the private sector is detailed in Appendix F.

#### **7.10.2 Identifying and mobilising additional organisations**

Each Principal Response Agency should have a Controller of Operations at the site (or at each site) of the Major Emergency. S/he will decide and request the attendance of such services as s/he determines are needed and exercise control over such services as s/he has requested to attend. Subsequently, the On-Site Co-ordinator shall exercise an over-viewing role of all arrangements to mobilise additional resources to the site of the Major Emergency, and to track the status of mobilisation requests, and deployment of additional resources.

### **7.10.3 Arrangements for liaison with utilities**

Utility companies are frequently involved in the response to emergencies, usually to assist the Principal Response Agencies in making situations safe.

### **7.10.4 Arrangements for integration of casual volunteers**

### **7.10.5 Command, control, co-ordination and demobilisation of organisations mobilised to the site;**

The On-Site Co-ordinator shall exercise an over-viewing role of all arrangements to mobilise additional resources to the site of the Major Emergency. S/he will track the status of mobilisation requests and deployment of additional resources. Each Principal Response Agency with a linked Voluntary Emergency Services/Organisation is responsible for the mobilisation of that service and their integration into the overall response. The internal command of the organisation resides with that organisation.

### **7.10.6 Mutual aid arrangements**

Each Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of his/her individual Principal Response Agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended, support is obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring Principal Response Agencies. Local Authorities will support each other on a mutual aid basis. Please refer to Section 4.5 of this Document.

### **7.10.7 Out-of-region assistance**

The decision to seek assistance from outside the Region should be made by the Lead Agency, in association with the other Principal Response Agencies, at the Local/Regional Coordination Centre. The Local/Regional Co-ordination Group should identify the level/type of assistance likely to be required and its duration. The Group/s should also seek to identify the possible options for sourcing such assistance, be that from neighbouring Regions, elsewhere in the state, from Northern Ireland, the rest of the United Kingdom or from other EU member states.

### **7.10.8 International assistance**

A Regional Co-ordination Group may request assistance from the Government. National resources will be available in the event of a Major Emergency at Local or Regional Level. Requests for assistance should be developed at Local or Regional Co-ordination Level and directed by the Lead Agency to the Lead Government Department. The European Community has established a Community Mechanism to facilitate the provision of assistance between the member states in the event of Major Emergencies. Requests for such assistance should be made by the Chair of the Local or Regional Coordination Group to the National Liaison Officer at the Department. *(see section 4.7 and 10.1)*

## **7.11 Casualty and Survivor Arrangements**

### **7.11.1 General arrangements for Casualties and Survivors**

The primary objective of any response to a Major Emergency is to provide effective arrangements for the rescue, care, treatment and rehabilitation of all of the individuals who are affected by the emergency. These individuals may be divided into two main categories as follows:

- Casualties - including persons who are killed or injured
- Survivors - include all those individuals who are caught up in an emergency but not injured.

#### **7.11.1.1 Rescue and care of all Casualties and Survivors**

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, will need to make an early assessment of the casualty situation and identify if there are particular aspects which may impact on casualty management, such as, significant numbers of disabled, sick or immobile persons involved, and take action accordingly.

As well as making provision for casualties and survivors, the Principal Response Agencies should also make arrangements for the reception, facilitation and support of the friends and relatives of some or all of these individuals. *(see appendix J and K for more information)*

### **7.11.2 Injured**

At the site of a Major Emergency, the priorities of the Principal Emergency Services are to save life, prevent further injury, rescue those who are trapped or in danger, triage casualties, provide them with appropriate treatment and transport them to the appropriate hospital(s) where necessary. Once injured casualties have been rescued or found, they should be assessed or triaged as quickly as possible. Casualties are often found some distance from the primary site and search teams, co-ordinated by An Garda Síochána, should be established where it is considered that this may be necessary.

#### **7.11.2.1 Council's role in triage, treatment and transport to hospital of all injured persons**

Where transport to hospital is required, this will be provided by the Ambulance Service. In certain circumstances the assistance of the Civil Defence may be required to aid in the transportation of casualties to hospital. This will be arranged between the On-Site Co-ordinator and the other two Controllers of Operations. The County Council Controller of Operations will be responsible for the Mobilisation of the Civil Defence. *(Laois County Council mobilisation procedures includes the Civil Defence, see Appendix A and Appendix C for more details)*

**7.11.2.2 Council's role for transporting lightly injured and uninjured persons from the site**

The Civil Defence may be requested to aid in circumstances where lightly injured or uninjured persons are to be transported from the site. This will be arranged between the On-Site Co-ordinator and the other two Controllers of Operations.

**7.11.2.3 Casualty Clearing Station, Ambulance Loading Points and the designation of receiving Hospitals**

Arrangements for a Casualty Clearing Station, Ambulance Loading Point, the designation of receiving hospitals and the distribution of injured casualties are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive. (See Appendix J and K for more information)

**7.11.3 Fatalities**

The bodies of casualties, which have been triaged as dead, should not be moved from the incident site unless this is necessary to affect the rescue of other casualties. The only other circumstance where bodies should be moved, before the Garda evidence collection process is complete, is if they are likely to be lost or damaged due to their location or the nature of the incident.

**7.11.3.1 Coroners role and how the Council supports this.**

In the event of a major emergency where fatalities occur, lawful jurisdiction for removal and custody of the bodies lying in Laois, and for investigation of the deaths, lies with the coroner in accordance with law, particularly the Coroners Act 1962. The Council will support the coroner's role including the provision of temporary mortuary facilities. (Regional facilities are available)

**7.11.3.2 Council's role in dealing with fatalities, both on and off-site,**

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, will decide if it is necessary to establish a Body Holding Area at the site. The Body Holding Area, if established, should be situated close to the Casualty Clearing Station. (see appendix N)

Members of An Garda Síochána will staff this area and they will maintain the necessary logs to ensure the continuity of evidence. It should be noted that the Body Holding Area is not the appropriate place for the prolonged storage of the dead and appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure minimal delay in moving bodies to a mortuary (temporary or otherwise).

Where circumstances require it, a Temporary Mortuary may be established. The Local Co-ordination Group, in consultation with the Coroner, should make this decision. The Provision of a Temporary Mortuary is the responsibility of the County Council.

### **7.11.3.3 Council's role in identification of the deceased.**

Following initial triage, casualties will normally be labeled, using Triage Cards. If bodies are to be moved due to the likelihood of them being lost or damaged, they should be photographed first and their original position clearly marked and recorded. The recovery of the dead and human remains is part of an evidence recovery process and, as such, is the responsibility of An Garda Síochána, acting as agents of the Coroner. The County Council may assist An Garda Síochána in this function.

### **7.11.4 Survivors**

In many emergency situations, survivors who are uninjured may become involved in the rescue and care of other victims. All those who have survived the incident uninjured can be directed to the Survivor Centre, where their details will be documented and collated by An Garda Síochána.

#### **7.11.4.1 Survivors requiring support**

The Survivor Reception Centre is a secure location to which survivors, not requiring hospital treatment, can be taken for shelter, first aid, interview and documentation. Where considered appropriate, a Survivor Reception Centre (or Centres) should be designated and established at the earliest possible opportunity. The On-Site Coordinator, in conjunction with the other Controllers, should determine if such a centre is to be established and where it is to be located. The Survivor Reception Centre is not usually located at the site, but rather in a suitable near-by premise, such as a hotel. (see Appendix F)

It is the responsibility of the County Council to establish and run the Survivor Reception Centre. Provision should be made at the Centre for the immediate physical and psychosocial needs of survivors (e.g. hot drinks, food, blankets, telephones, first aid for minor injuries, etc).

### **7.11.5 Casualty Information**

Dedicated telephone help lines should be established to facilitate the dissemination of Casualty Information to concerned friends or relatives of those involved in the Major Emergency. Gathering of casualty information will be the responsibility of An Garda Síochána.

#### **7.11.5.1 The Casualty Bureau**

In the event of a major emergency involving significant numbers of casualties, An Garda Síochána will establish a Casualty Bureau to collect and collate the details (including condition and location) of all casualties and survivors. To facilitate this process, a liaison/casualty officer will normally be sent by An Garda Síochána to each hospital/area where casualties are being treated.

All other services should ensure that any information collected on any casualty is transferred via An Garda Síochána to the Casualty Bureau.



The Casualty Bureau is the central contact point for the matching of information available on casualties with requests from all those seeking or providing information about persons involved in the incident. The media will be asked to circulate the contact numbers for the Bureau so that the public can make enquiries and provide information.

#### **7.11.5.2 Collection of casualty information**

To facilitate this, a liaison/casualty officer will normally be sent by An Garda Síochána to each hospital, survivor reception centre and casualty reception centre where casualties are being treated.

#### **7.11.6 Friends and Relatives Reception Centres**

Some incidents may warrant the establishment of Friends and Relatives Reception Centres at appropriate locations associated with the emergency, in addition to those provided at the hospitals where the injured are being treated.

The Local Co-ordination Group will determine the need for and arrange for the designation and operation/staffing of such centres.

The purpose of a reception centre is to provide a comfortable area where friends and relatives of those involved in the incident (primarily the casualties and survivors) can be directed for information. A building used as a Friends and Relatives Reception Centre should be secure from media intrusion and contain sufficient room to afford privacy to families receiving information about relatives. There will also be a need for a reliable process to establish the credentials of friends and relatives.

#### **7.11.6.1 How friends and relatives of casualties are to be provided for,**

Where possible Laois County Council will assist An Garda Síochána with establishing and operation of this area.

#### **7.11.7 Non-National Casualties**

In a Major Emergency that involves casualties from other jurisdictions, if the nationality of the victims is known, the Local Co-ordination Centre is to notify the relevant Embassy. The relevant department should be approached if assistance is required in obtaining interpreters from private sector providers. (Some Contact details are contained in Appendix H)

#### **7.11.7.1 Situations which involve non-national casualties**

County Council Staff with foreign language communication skills will be contacted in the event of Emergency involving non-national casualties. Laois County Council has a list of Council staff who have foreign language communication skills - Contact details are contained in Appendix H.

#### **7.11.8 Pastoral and Psycho-social Care**

It is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive to provide for the pastoral and psycho-social support arrangements of casualties and other affected members of the public.

#### **7.12.1 Major Hazardous Materials incidents**

The County Council is the Lead Agency for response to hazardous materials incidents, with the exception of those involving biological agents. Where terrorist involvement is suspected, An Garda Síochána will act as the Lead Agency. The Defence Forces, when requested, will assist An Garda Síochána in an Aid to the Civil Power role with Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams. Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a CBRN (i.e. Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear) incident are contained in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological – Nuclear Emergency (*See Appendix X form more details*)

#### **7.12.2 Council's role in dealing with Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) incidents.**

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers of Operations, will establish the need for decontamination. The Health Service Executive has responsibility for providing clinical decontamination and medical treatment to casualties affected by hazardous materials. The Fire Service has responsibility for providing other forms of physical decontamination of persons at the site. The Health Service Executive will be responsible for decontamination where required to protect Health Service facilities, such as hospitals, from secondary contamination.

Where emergency decontamination of the public is required, the Fire Service may use its fire-fighter decontamination facilities, or improvised equipment may be used prior to the arrival of dedicated equipment.

The On-Site Co-ordinator will take the decision on how best to protect a threatened population, after consultation with the other Controllers of Operations and Private Sector Experts if necessary. This protection is usually achieved by moving people temporarily to a safe area, by evacuation where appropriate or feasible, or by advising affected individuals to take shelter in an appropriate place. (See Department's Guide to Managing Evacuations at [www.mem.ie](http://www.mem.ie) (*see appendix X and Section 8 of this plan for more details*))

### **7.12.3 Biological incidents**

Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Suspect Chemical and Biological Agents  
(currently in Draft)

### **7.12.4 National Pandemic Influenza Plan**

For infectious diseases such as Avian Flu, Pandemic Flu, Foot and Mouth there will be a link to the National Plan as outlined by the Government. Laois County Council will provide assistance as required, and where possible under the command of the lead government department.

### **7.12.5 National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents;**

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a local radiological emergency or the activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological/ Nuclear Emergencies (See Appendix X)

### **7.12.6 Council's role in clinical, personnel and mass decontamination**

Additional issues in relation to decontamination of the public may arise at some hazardous materials incidents. Decontamination in this context refers to a range of procedures employed to remove hazardous materials from people and equipment. It includes terms such as:

- **Clinical decontamination** meaning medical treatment by health professionals of patients affected by or contaminated with hazardous materials;
- **Personnel decontamination** meaning the decontamination of uninjured exposed persons;
- **Mass decontamination** is the procedure deployed where significant numbers of persons are deemed to require decontamination, beyond the normal decontamination capacity

### **7.13.1 Protecting Threatened Populations**

There are circumstances when it may be necessary to protect members of the public who are in the vicinity of an emergency event. This protection is usually achieved by moving people temporarily to a safe area, by evacuation where appropriate or feasible, or by advising affected individuals to take shelter in an appropriate place.

The On-Site Co-ordinator will take the decision on how best to protect a threatened population, after consultation with the other Controllers of Operations and private sector experts where necessary. It is a function of the County Council to advise on protection of persons threatened, by sheltering or evacuation. (*see Appendix X and Section 8 for more details*)

In some situations, it can be anticipated that there will be a level of self-evacuation, and this may need to be considered as part of the emergency management considerations.

### **7.13.2 Council's role in evacuation Arrangements (accommodation and welfare)**

Where decided upon, the process of evacuation will be undertaken by An Garda Síochána, with the assistance of the other services. It is the responsibility of the Local Authorities to provide Rest Centres for evacuated populations. Where significant numbers of evacuees are involved, the Local/Regional Co-ordination Group may decide on an allocation/distribution system to ensure that appropriate facilities are available for evacuees. The location of these Rest Centres and procedures are listed in the Accommodation and Welfare Sub-Plan as provided by the Civil Defence (*see Section 8 of this Plan*). Personnel from the County Council and from Voluntary Agencies will staff rest centres.

### **7.13.3 Arrangements for the involvement of the Public Health Service**

It is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive to make arrangements for the involvement of the Public Health Service.

## **7.14 Early Public warning Systems**

There may be a need to inform the public of the current situation or of possible evacuation. (See Appendix J, K and Z)

### **7.14.1 Council's role in monitoring potentially hazardous situations,**

Warnings may be disseminated to the public by use of some or all of the following media:

- Door to door
- Radio and TV broadcasting
- Local helpline/information line

- Web services and internet services
- Automated text services
- Establish site-specific warning systems.
- Social media

#### **7.14.2 How warnings are to be disseminated.**

All public warnings are to be issued via the designated Media Liaison Officer. The methods of disseminating Public Warnings are similar to those for Public Information. (Please refer to Sections 7.7 and 7.8 of this Plan for details.)

#### **7.15.1 Liaison with the Irish Coast Guard**

The Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to Inland Waterway Emergencies.

The Framework provides that An Garda Síochána should be the Principal Response agency to undertake initial co-ordination at inland waterway emergencies. After the initial response, this role may be re-assigned, following consultation between the Irish Coast Guard and An Garda Síochána.

#### **7.16.1 Safety, Health and Welfare of staff.**

Each Principal Response Agency (and other responding organisation) is responsible for the Safety, Health and Welfare of its staff responding to emergencies and should operate its own safety (including personal protective equipment P.P.E) and welfare management procedures.(see appendix T for more information)

Laois County Council employees will work and operate under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Fire Brigade personnel will operate under the National Incident Command System N.I.C.S. This system has been developed under the 'Safe Person concept'. It sets out good practice and offers supporting advice and guidance in the areas within the Fire Service considered critical to the health and safety of Fire Service personnel.

#### **7.16.2 Council's command support arrangements for rescue personnel.**

The activities of County Council Rescue Personnel within the 'Danger Area' shall be under the overall control and direction of the Chief Fire Officer or designated alternates. The National Incident Command System, noted above, will also be in operation at the scene of a Major Emergency.

#### **7.16.3 Safety when operating within the 'Danger Area'.**

A Danger Area may be declared where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel, over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations. This could arise because of dangers posed by the release of hazardous materials, buildings in danger of further collapse, the threat of explosion or the presence of an armed individual. Any officer/responder who is aware of such additional risks should bring them to the attention of the On-Site Co-ordinator via his/her Controller

of Operations. The On-site Co-ordination Group may, in light of the available information, decide to declare a Danger Area and may designate an officer, appropriate for the circumstances, (e.g. the Senior Fire Officer at the site in a case involving hazardous materials, to define the boundaries of, and to arrange cordon access to the Danger Area.)

The Controller of Operations continues to exercise operational control over their activities and shall ensure that all necessary safety, health and welfare measures and procedures are implemented when working within the Danger Area.

#### **7.16.4 Evacuation signal for the 'Danger Area'**

Where a situation deteriorates to a point where the Incident Commander in Charge of the Danger Area decides that it is necessary to withdraw response personnel from a Danger Area, a signal, comprising repeated sounding of a siren / whistle for ten seconds on, ten seconds off, will be given. All personnel should withdraw on hearing this signal.

#### **7.16.5 Physical welfare of responders (food, shelter, toilets)**

The County Council's Controller of Operations should ensure that appropriate rest and refreshment facilities are provided for response personnel at the site. This may be proved by the Civil Defence. (See Appendix J and K)

#### **7.16.6 Psycho-social support for Council personnel**

Those who are particularly traumatised by the events of a Major Emergency may require skilled professional help. All Fire Service personnel are given training on Critical Incident Stress Management C.I.S.M. This is an intervention protocol developed specifically for dealing with traumatic events.

#### **7.17 Logistical Issues/Protracted Incidents**

##### **7.17.1 Rotation of front line rescue / field staff**

As required, staff will be rotated to ensure safety, Health and Welfare standards are maintained and to ensure suitable rest periods are provided.

##### **7.17.2 Council's role in maintaining Day-to Day services**

The Crisis Management Team maintains the normal day-to-day services that the community requires from the County Council. The use of a Crisis Management Team facilitates the mobilisation of senior staff to deal with the crisis, in light of the evolving situation, rather than leaving multiple roles to a small number of individuals who hold key positions. In this way, the objectives of prioritising and managing a protracted crisis can be dealt with effectively, while keeping the day-to-day business running.

### **7.17.3 Initial and ongoing welfare for field staff**

Staff welfare arrangements will be given priority for both emergency personnel and general staff (including management). In addition, the needs of staff that are not directly involved in responding to the incident will also be considered.

### **7.18.1 Council's role in supporting An Garda Síochána's Investigations**

An Garda Síochána are the Primary Response Agency when an investigation is required where a crime has been identified or suspected in a Major Emergency. Subsequent investigations by An Garda Síochána will be carried out in accordance with Garda procedures. The first member(s) of An Garda Síochána to arrive at the site of a Major Emergency, where a suspected crime has been committed, automatically incurs the responsibility of preserving the site.

### **7.18.2 Council's role in minimising disruption of evidence**

The scene of a suspected crime will be preserved by An Garda Síochána until a complete and thorough examination has been made. An Garda Síochána will need to obtain evidence of the highest possible standard and will require that all evidence is left in situ, unless a threat to life or health prevents this. Statements may be required from the staff of other Principal Response Agencies on their involvement.

### **7.18.3 Statutory investigations and liaison with An Garda Síochána**

Depending on the nature of the Major Emergency, agencies other than An Garda Síochána may require access to the site for the purposes of carrying out an investigation. These agencies may include the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Air Investigation Unit (AAIU), Irish Rail Investigation etc.

### **7.19.1 Links to communities affected by an emergency.**

Where communities are affected by a Major Emergency, efforts should be made to establish contacts/links with a community utilising established links such as Community Groups/ Public Representatives and Community Liaison Officers within the community.

### **7.19.2 Arrangements for receiving VIPs who wish to visit;**

All requests for visits to the site or facilities associated with it should be referred to the Local Co-ordination Group. Requests for visits to agency specific locations should be referred to that agency's management. Visits by dignitaries will usually require security arrangements and liaison with the media. It is important that the organisation of such visits does not distract from the response effort. As a general rule, VIPs should be advised not to visit sites where dangers still exist or where ongoing rescues are in progress.

### **7.19.3 Specify arrangements for national / international observers**

The presence of experts from other regions or jurisdictions, who wish to act as observers at an incident, can greatly enhance the operational debriefings and facilitate the process of learning lessons from the emergency. It may be beneficial to have pre-arranged observer teams, both National and International, for this role. The Local Co-ordination Group should make arrangements for any such observers.

### **7.20.1 Standing Down the Major Emergency**

When an emergency, which was imminent, does not actually occur, the person who activated the Plan may stand down the Major Emergency.

Otherwise, a decision to stand down the Major Emergency status of the incident at the site should be taken by the On-Site Co-ordinator, in consultation with the other Controllers of Operations at the site and the Local Co-ordination Group. A great deal of activity may continue at locations other than the site (such as the hospitals, temporary mortuary, etc.) after the Major Emergency is stood down at the site. The Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Groups may need to continue their work after activities at the site have ceased.

As the situation is brought under control, each Controller of Operations should review the resources on site and reduce/stand down services in light of the changing situation. The On-Site Co-ordinator should be consulted before a decision is made to stand down any service. Where organisations other than the Principal Response Agencies have responded, they should be informed of the decision to stand them down by the Controller of Operations of the agency which mobilised them. Services operating at other locations should be stood down in a similar manner.

### **7.20.2 Operational debriefing and reporting**

Following the stand down of the Major Emergency the three Principal Response Agencies are to review the inter-agency co-ordination aspects of the response. This review should be hosted by the Lead Agency and involve all services which were part of the response. The purpose of the review should be to formulate the lessons learned from the incident in relation to co-ordination and to document these.

A composite report, based on appropriate input from each Principal Response Agency's internal report and the report on co-ordination, on every declared Major Emergency is to be compiled by the Principal Response Agency which was the initial Lead Agency. The report is to be prepared within a reasonable timescale and sent to the Midland Regional Steering Group and the National Steering Group.



## Section 8

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### Agency Specific Elements and Sub-Plans

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Sub-Plans for Laois County Council are located in the Local Co-Ordination Centre. Additionally, all Sub-Plans will be brought to the site/s of the Major Emergency and will be available to the Controller of Operations and his/her Team.  
(See Appendix E for addition staff details)

(See Appendix X for more details regarding the Department's Major Emergency Management Website and list of available Guidance Documents and Protocols)

Visit:

***[www.mem.ie](http://www.mem.ie)***

## Section 9



# Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

### 9.1 Regional Level Co-ordination for a Regional Major Emergency

A local response to a Major Emergency may be scaled up to a Regional Level where the nature of an emergency is such that:

- The resources available in the local area where the incident has occurred, do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner: or
- The consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area: or
- The incident(s) is spread across more than one Local Authority. HSE Area or division of An Garda Síochána: or
- The incident occurs at or close to a boundary of several of the Principal Response Agencies.
- The incident which has occurred involves one or more of the regional risks as identified in Regional Risk Assessment

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a Regional Level Emergency and activate the plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination involves the provision of mutual aid, support and Co-ordination facilities and the activation of a Regional Co-ordination Group. *(The Regional Major Emergency Officer is mobilised as part of our Mobilisation procedure, see Appendix A and C)*

### 9.2 Activation of a Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

The key impact of a declaration of a Regional Level Emergency is that extra Principal Response Agencies (other than the Garda Division, HSE Area and Local Authority which are initially involved) are brought fully into the response and their Major Emergency Plans are activated.

The chair of the Local Co-ordination Group, in consultation with the chair of the On-Site Co-ordinating Group and the other members of the Local Co-ordination Group, will decide which extra Principal Response Agencies will be activated, in light of the circumstances prevailing or likely to develop.

Note: In many Major Emergency situations, neighbouring Garda Divisions, HSE Areas and Local Authorities will provide support and resources to the Garda Division, HSE Area and Local Authority, which are primarily involved in the response. Such support is not equivalent to the activation of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination and, in fact, will often precede the activation of the Regional Plan.

### **9.3 Response Regions**

The response region for a Regional Level Major Emergency need not coincide (and in many cases will not coincide) with one of the pre-determined Major Emergency Management Regions set out Section 2.4 and Fig 2.2.

### **9.4 Regional Co-ordination Group**

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group (having declared the Regional Level Emergency) will convene and chair the meeting of the Regional Co-ordination Group. The Regional Co-ordination Group will, in effect, comprise the Local Co-ordination Group, augmented with representatives from the extra Principal Response Agencies, which have been activated as part of the Regional Response.

The Regional Co-ordination Group will usually meet in the same Centre as the Local Co-ordination Group. However, it may, depending on prevailing circumstances, decide to meet at another of the predetermined Local Co-ordination Centres within the response region.

### **9.5 Methods of Operation**

When the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination is activated, the methods of operation of the Principal Response Agencies at the site will be those set out for standard Major Emergencies subject only to the fact that additional Principal Response Agencies will be present.

Likewise, the methods of operation of the Regional Co-ordination Group will be those set out for the Local Co-ordination Group (see *Section 6.2.1*).



# Links with National Emergency Plans

## 10.1 National Emergency Plans:

There are a number of potential emergencies which, if they occur, are most likely to be on a National scale – including nuclear accidents, infectious disease outbreaks (e.g. smallpox, influenza pandemic) or outbreaks of animal disease (e.g. foot and mouth, avian flu). In contrast with Major Emergencies, the characteristics of these emergencies may include being non-site specific and occurring over an extended time period. In these situations the Lead Government Department or the appropriate National Body will activate the relevant National Emergency Plan.

National Bodies, operating in accordance with National Emergency Plans, may call upon the Local Authority to assist in responding to, or to perform their normal functions/ roles arising from, a National Level Emergency. The co-ordination arrangements of local Major Emergency Plans may be activated in support of these National Emergency Plans.

A suite of protocols has been developed by the Department to aid the Principal Response Agencies when dealing with specific National Emergencies. (See Appendix X)

### 10.1.1 National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a local radiological emergency or the activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological/ Nuclear Emergencies (See Appendix X for more information)

### 10.1.2 National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of an activation of the National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Emergencies arising from Infectious Diseases Pandemics (currently in Draft)

### 10.1.3 Animal Health Plan

For infectious diseases such as Avian Flu (The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has an emergency plan designed to contain outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza in poultry should the disease arrive in this country), Pandemic Flu, Foot and Mouth, there will be a link to the National Plan as outlined by the Government. Laois County Council will provide assistance under the command of the Lead Government Department.

**10.2      Activation of Plan at the request of The Irish Coast Guard**

This Major Emergency Plan may also be activated upon a request by the Irish Coast Guard, following a threatened or actual emergency in the Irish Maritime Search and Rescue region.

**10.3      Activation of the Plan at the request of a Minister of Government**

A Minister of Government, in light of an emergency/crisis situation, may activate this Major Emergency Plan. (See Section 6.3.4.5)



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## Severe Weather Plans

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**11.1 Severe weather Plans For:**

**Flooding Emergencies**  
**Severe Weather Conditions**  
**(Excluding Flooding Emergencies)**

Severe weather emergencies may involve significant threats to infrastructure and support may be required for vulnerable sections of the community. It has been pre-determined that Local Authorities are the Lead Agency for co-ordinating the response to severe weather events.

Arrangements have also been put in place by Met Éireann to issue public service severe weather warnings to Local Authorities. The target time for the issuing of a warning is 24 hours before the start of the event, but a warning may be issued up to 48 hours in advance when confidence is high.

While all severe weather warnings / events will not be Major Emergencies, Laois County Council have prepared for leading the response to Severe Weather events *(See Section 8 and Appendix U of this plan)*

The Local and/or Regional Co-ordination Centres, for Major Emergency Management may be activated to manage the response to a severe weather event, whether a Major Emergency is declared or not. The generic Major Emergency management arrangements will also apply to severe weather events.

*(See Appendix U of this Plan for more details regarding our Severe Weather preparedness)*

## Section 12

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# Site and Event Specific Arrangements and Plans

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### 12.1 Site and Event Specific Emergency plans

There are currently no Event Plans prepared for what are relatively small scale local festivals held at temporary venues around the County.

All larger scale events, which require a Licence prior to their commencement, will be subject to Site/Event Specific plans.

### 12.2 Seveso Sites

There are currently no Seveso Sites in County Laois



# The Recovery Phase

The recovery phase can be described as the process of restoring and rebuilding the community in the aftermath of an emergency. This process can be long and arduous and requires a co-ordinated approach from all of the agencies involved.

In general, it is the function of the Local Co-ordination Group to provide strategic level management for the immediate, medium and long term consequences of an incident.

### 13.1 Supports for Individuals and Communities

Resilient communities are invaluable when coping with emergencies and they can play a key role in the protection, rescue and care of vulnerable individuals within the community.

The Local Co-ordination Group will provide strategic management to take whatever steps necessary to start to a plan for recovery.

#### 13.1.1 Support for individuals and communities affected by the emergency during the recovery phase

The recovery stage may be as demanding on the resources and staff of the Local Authority as the emergency itself. A large range of Voluntary Emergency Services, Utilities and private sector services may be mobilised to assist the Local Authority when implementing the following functions:

- Clean-up
- Rebuilding the community and infrastructure
- Supporting the recovery of affected communities
- Responding to community welfare needs (e.g. housing, water)
- Restoration of services

#### 13.1.2 Public appeals and external aid

The Local Co-ordination Group will establish public appeals and external aid as required.



## **13.2 Clean-Up**

One of the main considerations of the recovery stage is to implement the Local Authority's arrangements for the clean-up of the damaged areas. In the event of a Major Emergency, the removal of debris and contaminated waste will be one of the principal concerns for Laois County Council. In consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency and specialist companies the Local Authority will commence clean up of a site as soon as possible but without hindering the investigation process. Careful consideration must be provided for the removal of decontaminated debris

### **13.2.1 Clean up of sites / removal of debris / decontamination of sites of emergency**

Laois County Council shall undertake the following functions, subject to resources, arising from a Major Emergency with respect to Clean Up of the area/s affected by the incident:

- Arrange/oversee the clean-up of the affected area/s
- Engage any specialist contractors required to assist with recovery operations
- Arrange for the site clearance, demolition, clean up operations, removal and disposal of debris,
- Decontamination of the site/s of the emergency

## **13.3 Restoration of Infrastructure and Services.**

The Local Co-ordinator group will ensure that Laois County Council essential services are maintained where possible during the Major Emergency.

### **13.3.1 Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the situation**

Laois County Council will monitor the situation and mobilise senior staff to deal with the crisis as required. In this way, the objectives of prioritising and managing a protracted crisis can be dealt with effectively, while keeping the day-to-day business running.

### **13.3.2 Procedure for liaison with utilities**

When requested the Crisis Management Team will establish contact with all relevant utilities with regards to restoration / maintenance / or enhancing services provided to the site or to persons affected by the emergency. See Appendix F for list of utilities contacts.

### **13.3.3 How the order of priorities are to be determined**

The Local Co-ordination Group and the Crisis Management Team will ensure that the Critical Services are prioritised (i.e. hospitals, water supply, food, communications, etc.)

### **13.3.4 Protection measures against continuing hazards.**

The Local Co-ordination Group Team will ensure that adequate resources are deployed and managed to prevent further escalation of the emergency while restoring normality to the site or persons affected

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**Review of the Major Emergency Plan**

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**14.1 Internal Annual Review of the Plan**

The Major Emergency Plan for Laois County Council will be reviewed on an annual basis. The plan will be amended as deemed necessary.

**14.2 External Annual Review of Plan**

Laois County Council will carry out an annual appraisal of Preparedness for Major Emergency response. The Department has prepared a Guidance Document entitled 'A Guide to Undertaking an Appraisal' to assist with this review.

The appraisal will then be reviewed by the Department. The Plan is to be reviewed externally in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochána, Westmeath, Longford and Offaly Local Authorities. The Plan will be amended as deemed necessary.

**14.2.1 Review of Regional Major Emergency Group Plan**

The Principal Response Agency holding the chair of the Regional Steering Group in Major Emergency Management will carry out an annual appraisal of Regional Level Preparedness for Inter-Agency Major Emergency response. The dates for this process will be set each year by the National Steering Group on Major Emergency Management, in consultation with the Regional Steering Groups.

**14.2.2 Review of Plan by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.**

Major Emergency Plans may be reviewed by the Department and amended as necessary.

**14.3 Review of Plan following Exercises/Activations.**

If deemed necessary, the Plan may be updated / reviewed after each Major Emergency Exercise has been carried out and / or after its activation in a real emergency.

<b>14.3.1</b>	<b><u>Internal Review of Agency's performance</u></b>
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An internal review and report is to be carried out on the performance of Laois County Council in carrying out its functions.

<b>14.3.2</b>	<b><u>How the co-ordination function will be reviewed and reported upon externally and jointly with other principal response agencies.</u></b>
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Multi agency reviews must also be conducted on an annual basis between the Principle Response Agencies on both a Local, and Regional level basis. This will include reviewing and reporting on the co-ordination function of the Agencies.

## Appendix I

### **Lead Agency (Pre-determined and default Arrangements.)**

The concept of the Lead Agency is accepted as the method for establishing which Agency has initial responsibility for Coordination of all Services on the site of a Major Emergency. The predetermined and default agencies for different types of emergencies are as follows:

<b>Emergency Incident Type</b>	<b>Initial Pre-nominated Lead Agency</b>	<b>Likely Change <sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Road Traffic Accident <sup>2</sup></b>	An Garda Síochána	
<b>Fire</b>	Local Authority	
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	Local Authority	
<b>Train Crash</b>	Local Authority	An Garda Síochána when rescue phase complete
<b>Aircraft Incident</b>	Local Authority	An Garda Síochána when fire fighting/rescue phase complete
<b>Rescue</b>	Local Authority	
<b>Weather Related</b>	Local Authority	
<b>Biological Incident</b>	Health Services	
<b>Open Country Search &amp; Rescue (Lowland)</b>	An Garda Síochána	
<b>Open Country Search &amp; Rescue (Mountain)</b>	An Garda Síochána	
<b>Public Order/Crowd Events</b>	An Garda Síochána	
<b>CCBRN Conventional Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear</b>	An Garda Síochána	Local Authority Health Service Executive Local Authority Local Authority
<b>Accidental Explosions/ Building Collapse</b>	Local Authority	An Garda Síochána to investigate when search and rescue complete
<b>Environmental/Pollution</b>	Local Authority	
<b>Marine Emergency Impacting On-Shore</b>	Local Authority	
<b>Water Rescue Inland</b>	An Garda Síochána	

<sup>1</sup> Likely changes in lead agency will arise from changing circumstances.

<sup>2</sup> Road Traffic Accident in this context excludes Road Traffic Accidents involving Hazardous Materials (other than fuel in vehicles).

In certain situations where an emergency affects an extensive area or occurs near the borders of Local Authority areas, there may be a response from multiple Local Authorities. There should only be one Controller of Operations for each of the three principal response agencies and it is necessary to determine from which unit of the principal response agency the Controller of Operations should come. In the case of Local Authorities, which are statutorily empowered in respect of their functional areas, procedures for resolving issues relating to which Local Authority is in control may already be set out in Section 85 agreements. Where they are not so covered, and the issue cannot be resolved quickly in discussion between the responding officers of the different units of those services, the Local Authority Controller of Operations should be the designated person from the Local Authority whose Rostered Senior Fire Officer was first to attend the incident.

**See Appendix F7 (Page 30) of the Framework for Major Emergency Management for full Details regarding the Designation of the Lead Agency.**

**Provided on next pages**

## Appendix F7: Designation of the Lead Agency

### The Lead Agency Concept

The Department of Defence's *Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance*<sup>7</sup> introduced the concept of assigning lead roles to Government Departments in emergency planning in Ireland. The Framework extends that concept to the principal response agencies, and provides that the lead agency should be quickly identified/designated once a major emergency has been declared and assigned responsibility for the co-ordination function.

### Determination of Lead Agency

This Appendix sets out the mechanisms for determining the lead agency in different situations. Two mechanisms, which should be applied in sequence by the three Controllers of Operations at the site, are envisaged to determine the lead agency for any emergency.

- The first is by pre-nomination. In Table 7.1 below, pre-nominated lead agencies for common incident types are listed, and this should be the primary basis for determining the lead agency;
- The second is a "default" arrangement, where the categorisations in the table do not seem to apply and the lead agency is not obvious. In these situations, which should be rare, the Local Authority will be the "default" lead agency.

It is important that there is rapid determination of the lead agency in each emergency situation, as this determines which one of the three Controllers of Operations is to act as the On-Site Co-ordinator. When this determination is made, the person assuming the role of On-Site Co-ordinator should note the time and that the determination was made in the presence of the two other controllers on site. This should then be communicated by the On-Site Co-ordinator to all the parties involved in the response, and the On-Site Co-ordinator should begin to undertake that role.

The Framework provides that the lead agency role may change over time, to reflect the changing circumstances of the major emergency. Ownership of the lead agency mantle should be reviewed at appropriate stages of the major emergency. All changes in lead agency designation emanating from the site, and the timing thereof, will be by agreement of the three Controllers of Operations, and should be recorded and communicated as per the initial determination. As the emphasis of operations may shift from the site to other areas, the Local Co-ordination Group may review the issue and determine a change in the lead agency, as appropriate.

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<sup>7</sup> Department of Defence, *Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance*, (2004)

**TABLE 7.1**  
**Pre-nominated Lead Agencies for Different**  
**Categories of Emergency<sup>8 9</sup>**

Emergency Incident Type	Initial Pre-nominated Lead Agency	Likely Change <sup>10</sup>
Road Traffic Accident <sup>11</sup>	An Garda Síochána	
Fire	Local Authority <sup>12</sup>	
Hazardous Materials	Local Authority	
Train Crash	Local Authority	To An Garda Síochána when rescue phase complete
Aircraft Incident	Local Authority	To An Garda Síochána when fire-fighting/rescue phase complete
Rescue	Local Authority	
Weather Related	Local Authority	
Biological Incident	Health Services	
Open Country Search and Rescue (Lowland)	An Garda Síochána	
Open Country Search and Rescue (Mountain)	An Garda Síochána <sup>13</sup>	

<sup>8</sup> These pre-nominations of lead agencies are to apply to all emergencies, from normal through the full range of major emergencies.

<sup>9</sup> The pre-nomination of a lead agency among the principal response agencies does not necessarily imply a change to the designation of lead Government Department, as set out in the Department of Defence's Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance. The determination of lead Government Department arising from the declaration of a major emergency will be as set out in Section 5.4.5.5 of the Framework.

<sup>10</sup> Likely changes in lead agency will arise from changing circumstances.

<sup>11</sup> Road Traffic Accident in this context excludes Road Traffic Accidents involving Hazardous Materials (other than fuel in vehicles).

<sup>12</sup> As its principal emergency service, the fire service is assigned initial responsibility for each category where the Local Authority is designated as lead agency, as it is likely to be the first attendance of that agency at the site. This may become a broader Local Authority function at a later stage of the major emergency.

<sup>13</sup> An Garda Síochána may be assisted by specialist groups, such as Mountain Rescue teams.



**TABLE 7.1 (Continued)**

Emergency Incident Type	Initial Pre-nominated Lead Agency	Likely Change <sup>10</sup>
<b>Public Order/Crowd Events</b>	An Garda Síochána	
<b>CCBRN<sup>14</sup></b> Conventional <sup>15</sup> Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear <sup>16</sup>	An Garda Síochána	Local Authority Health Service Executive Local Authority Local Authority
<b>Accidental Explosions/ Building Collapse</b>	Local Authority	To An Garda Síochána to investigate when search and rescue complete
<b>Environmental/Pollution</b>	Local Authority	
<b>Marine Emergency Impacting On-Shore</b>	Local Authority <sup>17</sup>	
<b>Water Rescue Inland</b>	An Garda Síochána <sup>18</sup>	

#### Determination of the Lead Agency in Regional Level Major Emergencies

The Framework provides that Regional Level Major Emergencies may be declared in certain circumstances (See Section 5.4.5.4). The procedure for determining the lead agency in a Regional Level Major Emergency will build from that for determining the lead agency in a Local Major Emergency, and will be as follows:

- the three Controllers of Operations meet on site and determine a lead agency as set out above;



<sup>14</sup> Where terrorist involvement is suspected, An Garda Síochána should assume the lead role, regardless of the agent. Should it subsequently transpire that there is no terrorist involvement, the lead agency may change as indicated above.

<sup>15</sup> The Defence Forces, when requested, will assist An Garda Síochána, in an Aid to the Civil Power role, with Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams, at suspected terrorist incidents. Additional Defence Forces support in an Aid to the Civil Power role may be sought, if required.

<sup>16</sup> It is envisaged that Local/Regional involvement would arise only on foot of activation under the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents (NEPNA).

<sup>17</sup> The Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for co-ordinating response to marine emergencies at sea. The Irish Coast Guard may, in certain circumstances, request the principal emergency services to assist them offshore. When the Irish Coast Guard request the declaration of a major emergency, as provided for in Section 4.2, where casualties are being brought ashore (or pollution is coming, or threatening to come, ashore), the onshore response will be co-ordinated by the Local Authority.

<sup>18</sup> The Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to Inland Waterway emergencies. The Framework provides that An Garda Síochána should be the principal response agency to undertake initial co-ordination at inland waterway emergencies. After the initial response, this role may be re-assigned, following consultation between the Irish Coast Guard and An Garda Síochána.

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- 
- the designated person from that lead agency convenes and chairs the Local Co-ordination Group;
  - a Regional Level Major Emergency may be declared by the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group, following consultation with the other members of the Local Co-ordination Group;
  - the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group will determine the initial region – and therefore principal response agencies - involved, following consultation with the other members of the Local Co-ordination Group;
  - a Regional Level Co-ordination Group will then be convened and chaired by the same lead agency that has declared the Regional Major Emergency, in accordance with the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination; and
  - the Regional Level Co-ordination Group should review, and adjust as appropriate, the region involved and the designation of lead agency, when it is in session.

#### **Determination of the Lead Agency where Response Involves Multiple Divisions of An Garda Síochána or Areas of the Health Service Executive or Local Authorities**

In certain situations, e.g. where an emergency affects an extensive area or occurs near the borders of Divisions of An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive Areas or Local Authorities areas, there may be a response from multiple units of the principal response agencies. There should only be one Controller of Operations for each of the three principal response agencies and it is necessary to determine from which unit of the principal response agency the Controller of Operations should come.

An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive are national organisations, and issues relating to identifying the Controller or Operations for those services (and the On-Site Co-ordinator in consequence) will be determined internally, generally in discussion between the responding officers of the different units of those services, or by referring the question to an appropriate higher level.

In the case of Local Authorities, which are statutorily empowered in respect of their functional areas, procedures for resolving such issues may already be set out in what are referred to as Section 85 agreements. Where they are not so covered, and the issue cannot be resolved quickly in discussion between the responding officers of the different units of those services, the Local Authority Controller of Operations should be the designated person from the Local Authority whose rostered senior fire officer was first to attend the incident.

Each Controller of Operations at a multi-authority response site should ensure that each responding authority is represented on his/her support team. Each agency should continue to exercise control over their own services, as provided for in Section 5.3.1.

## Appendix J

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### **Functions of Laois County Council, Lead Agency, An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive**

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**Laois County Council** undertakes the following **functions** in the response to a Major Emergency:

	Yes	No
• Declaration of a Major Emergency and notifying the other two relevant principal response agencies;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Mobilisation of predetermined resources and activating predetermined procedures in accordance with its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Acting as Lead Agency, where this is determined in accordance with Appendix I and undertaking the specified coordination function	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Protection and rescue of persons and property;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Controlling and/or extinguishing of fires;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Dealing with hazardous material incidents including:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o identification, containment, neutralisation and clearance of chemical spills and emissions;		
o decontamination (other than clinical decontamination) on-site of persons affected (under medical supervision where necessary);		
• Advising on protection of persons threatened, by sheltering or evacuation;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Arranging/overseeing clean-up of affected areas;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Limiting damage to infrastructure and property;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Provision of access/transport to/from the site of the emergency;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Provision of additional lighting required, beyond what the principal emergency services normally carry;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Assisting An Garda Síochána to recover bodies, when requested;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Support for An Garda Síochána forensic work;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Support for the Coroner’s role, including provision of temporary mortuary facilities;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Accommodation and welfare of evacuees and persons displaced by the emergency;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Provision of food, rest and sanitary facilities as appropriate for personnel involved in the response to the emergency;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Engaging any specialist contractors required to assist with emergency operations;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Liaison with utilities regarding restoration/maintenance/or enhancing services provided to the site or to persons affected;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Site clearance, demolition, clear-up operations, removal and disposal of debris;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a “National Emergency”, and coordinating/undertaking any counter-measures in its functional area which are required/recommended by an appropriate national body;
- Any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;
- Any function, which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform;
- Maintaining essential Local Authority services (e.g. roads availability, fire and emergency operations cover, public water supply, waste water treatment, waste disposal) during the major emergency.

In the event of Laois County Council being assigned the Lead Agency role, it will be assigned the responsibility for the Co-ordination function (in addition to its own functions) and it should lead all of the co-ordination activity associated with the emergency both on-site and off-site, and make every effort to achieve a high level of co-ordination.

The **functions** of the **Lead Agency** for any emergency include:

- |  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Ensuring involvement of the three Principal Response Agencies and the Principal Emergency Services in sharing information on the nature of the emergency situation                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Ensuring involvement of the range of organisations (other than Principal Response Agencies) who may be requested to respond in co-ordination activities and arrangements                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Ensuring that mandated co-ordination decisions are made promptly and communicated to all involved  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Ensuring that site management issues are addressed and decided;  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Ensuring that public information messages and media briefings are co-ordinated and implemented   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Ensuring that pre-arranged communications (technical) links are put in place and operating   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Operating the generic information management systems;  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Ensuring that the ownership of the Lead Agency role is reviewed, and modified as appropriate   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Ensuring that all aspects of the management of the incident are dealt with before the response is stood down   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Ensuring that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the emergency after it is closed down, and circulated (first as a draft) to the other services which attended | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## An Garda Síochána

An Garda Síochána undertake the following **functions** in the response to a major emergency:

	Yes	No
• Declaration of a Major Emergency and notifying the other two relevant principal response agencies;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Activation of predetermined procedures/arrangements in accordance with its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Requesting assistance from the Defence Forces in line with agreed protocols, MOUs, SLAs and current practices;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Acting as Lead Agency, where this is determined in accordance with Appendix I, and undertaking the specified co-ordination function;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Maintaining law and order;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Implementing agreed site plan/management arrangements, as appropriate;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Traffic management;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Crowd control;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Implementing agreed aspects of evacuation procedures;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Informing the public, as necessary and on the advice of the competent authorities, of actual or potential dangers arising from the emergency;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Co-ordinating/conducting searches for missing persons;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Assisting and directing survivors/uninjured persons away from the site (and any danger area) to places of safety;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Collecting information on casualties and survivors;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Arrangements in respect of the dead, in association with the Coroner;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Recovery of bodies;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Provision of casualty bureau/casualty information service;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Preservation of the site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Collection of evidence and forensic work;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Assisting the Coroner in the case of fatal casualties, inquiries or criminal proceedings;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Engaging any specialist contractors required to assist with emergency operations;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a “National Emergency”, and undertaking any countermeasures in its functional area which are required/ recommended by an appropriate national body;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Any function which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform; and,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Maintaining essential Garda services during the Major Emergency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **Health Service Executive**

**The Health Service Executive** undertakes the following **functions** in the response to a major emergency:

	Yes	No
• Declaration of a Major Emergency and notifying the other two relevant principal response agencies;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Activation of predetermined procedures/arrangements in accordance with its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Acting as Lead Agency, where this is determined in accordance with Appendix I, and undertaking the specified coordination function;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Provision of medical advice and assistance;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Provision of medical aid to casualties at the site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Triage of casualties, and assigning them to hospitals for evacuation;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Casualty evacuation and ambulance transport;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Provision of hospital treatment;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Provision of psycho-social support to persons affected by the emergency;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Certification of the dead;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Support for An Garda Síochána's forensic work;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Support for the Coroner's role;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Provision of community welfare services;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Clinical decontamination and decontamination of contaminated persons on arrival at hospital;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Advising and assisting An Garda Síochána and Local Authorities on public health issues arising;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a "National Emergency", and coordinating/undertaking any countermeasures in its functional area which are required/recommended by an appropriate national body;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Any function which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform; and,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Maintaining essential health services during the Major Emergency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**See Appendix F5 (i.e. Page 23-26) of the Framework for Major Emergency Management for full Details regarding the Functions of Principal Response Agencies.**

**Provided (See Following Pages)**

## *Appendix F5: Functions of the Principal Response Agencies (including the Principal Emergency Services) in Major Emergency Response*

This Appendix sets out the functions assigned in the Framework to each of the principal response agencies, including their emergency services. In general, the allocation of functions reflects the normal functions of the agencies and their services. In the initial stages of a response, it is expected that most of the functions of an agency will be undertaken by the emergency services element of that agency.

The allocation of functions is not intended as a barrier to sensible co-operation (working together towards the same end) and collaboration (working jointly on an activity) by those responding to the site of an emergency.

The boundaries between functions are not always clear, and rarely in an emergency situation is a function exercised unilaterally and without reference to the impact on other services. One of the main purposes of on-site co-ordination is to resolve issues which arise regarding relative priority between functions, and boundary issues around the discharge of these functions. The over-riding objective of protecting life and minimising distress should guide personnel from all services in resolving potential conflicts. It is the responsibility of the On-Site Co-ordinator to make decisions of this type when agreement cannot be reached quickly between the Controllers of Operations.

The information contained in this Appendix also allows the principal response agencies and their emergency services to be familiar with the responsibilities of the other emergency services in emergency situations.

Each service should respond to an emergency in accordance with its own predetermined arrangements, and with the assumption that other services are doing likewise. The principal response agencies may make arrangements with others to assist them in undertaking functions, but responsibility for the functions remains with the principal response agency.

The following are the general functions in responding and managing an emergency assigned by the Framework:

### *An Garda Síochána*

An Garda Síochána should undertake the following functions in the response to a major emergency:

- declaration of a Major Emergency and notifying the other two relevant principal response agencies;
- activation of predetermined procedures/arrangements in accordance with its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure;



- requesting assistance from the Defence Forces in line with agreed protocols, MOUs, SLAs and current practices;
- acting as lead agency, where this is determined in accordance with Appendix F7, and undertaking the specified co-ordination function;
- maintaining law and order;
- implementing agreed site plan/management arrangements, as appropriate;
- traffic management;
- crowd control;
- implementing agreed aspects of evacuation procedures;
- informing the public, as necessary and on the advice of the competent authorities, of actual or potential dangers arising from the emergency;
- co-ordinating/conducting searches for missing persons;
- assisting and directing survivors/uninjured persons away from the site (and any danger area) to places of safety;
- collecting information on casualties and survivors;
- arrangements in respect of the dead, in association with the Coroner;
- recovery of bodies;
- provision of casualty bureaux/casualty information service;
- preservation of the site;
- collection of evidence and forensic work<sup>1</sup>;
- assisting the Coroner in the case of fatal casualties, inquiries or criminal proceedings;
- engaging any specialist contractors required to assist with emergency operations;
- exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site;
- monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a “National Emergency”, and undertaking any countermeasures in its functional area which are required/recommended by an appropriate national body;
- any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;
- any function which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform; and
- maintaining essential Garda services during the Major Emergency.

**Health Service Executive**

The Health Service Executive should undertake the following functions in the response to a major emergency: -

- declaration of a Major Emergency and notifying the other two relevant principal response agencies;

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<sup>1</sup> Precedence should only be given to this activity where it will not interfere with the protection of life, the rescue of live casualties, and the treatment of casualties





- activation of predetermined procedures/arrangements in accordance with its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure;
- acting as lead agency, where this is determined in accordance with Appendix F7, and undertaking the specified coordination function;
- provision of medical advice and assistance;
- provision of medical aid to casualties at the site;
- triage of casualties, and assigning them to hospitals for evacuation;
- casualty evacuation and ambulance transport;
- provision of hospital treatment;
- provision of psycho-social support to persons affected by the emergency;
- certification of the dead;
- support for An Garda Síochána's forensic work;
- support for the Coroner's role;
- provision of community welfare<sup>2</sup> services;
- clinical decontamination and decontamination of contaminated persons on arrival at hospital;
- advising and assisting An Garda Síochána and Local Authorities on public health issues arising;
- exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site;
- monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a "National Emergency", and co-ordinating<sup>3</sup>/undertaking any countermeasures in its functional area which are required/recommended by an appropriate national body;
- any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;
- any function which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform; and,
- maintaining essential health services during the Major Emergency.

#### Local Authority

The Local Authority should undertake the following functions arising from the Framework in the response to a major emergency: -

- declaration of a Major Emergency and notifying the other two relevant principal response agencies;
- mobilisation of predetermined resources and activating predetermined procedures in accordance with its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure;
- acting as lead agency, where this is determined in accordance with Appendix F7 and undertaking the specified coordination function;

<sup>2</sup> Welfare in this case is intended to mean the normal community welfare support services.

<sup>3</sup> The Health Service Executive should co-ordinate local aspects of the National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Emergency Plan



- protection and rescue of persons and property;
- controlling and/or extinguishing of fires;
- dealing with hazardous material incidents including:
  - o identification, containment, neutralisation and clearance of chemical spills and emissions;
  - o decontamination (other than clinical decontamination) on-site of persons affected (under medical supervision where necessary);
- advising on protection of persons threatened, by sheltering or evacuation;
- arranging/overseeing clean-up of affected areas;
- limiting damage to infrastructure and property;
- provision of access/transport to/from the site of the emergency;
- provision of additional lighting required, beyond what the principal emergency services normally carry;
- assisting An Garda Síochána to recover bodies, when requested;
- support for An Garda Síochána forensic work;
- support for the Coroner's role, including provision of temporary mortuary facilities;
- accommodation and welfare<sup>4</sup> of evacuees and persons displaced by the emergency;
- provision of food, rest and sanitary facilities as appropriate for personnel involved in the response to the emergency;
- engaging any specialist contractors required to assist with emergency operations;
- exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site;
- liaison with utilities regarding restoration/maintenance/or enhancing services provided to the site or to persons affected;
- site clearance, demolition, clear-up operations, removal and disposal of debris<sup>5</sup>;
- monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a "National Emergency", and co-ordinating<sup>6</sup>/undertaking any countermeasures in its functional area which are required/ recommended by an appropriate national body;
- any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;
- any function which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform; and,
- maintaining essential Local Authority services (e.g. roads availability, fire and emergency operations cover, public water supply, waste water treatment, waste disposal) during the major emergency.

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<sup>4</sup> Welfare in this case is intended to mean food, bedding, sanitary and washing facilities;

<sup>5</sup> This should be done after consultation with An Garda Síochána to avoid the possible destruction of evidence.

<sup>6</sup> The Local Authority should co-ordinate local aspects of National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents



## Appendix K

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### Mandates

#### Controller of Operations On-Site Co-ordinator Local Co-ordination Group and Chair

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The **Mandate** of the **Controller of Operations** is set out below:

	Yes	No
• To make such decisions as are appropriate to the role of controlling the activities of his/her agency's services at the site (Controlling in this context may mean setting priority objectives for individual services; command of each service should remain with the officers of that service.);	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To meet with the other two controllers and determine the Lead Agency;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To undertake the role of On-Site Co-ordinator, where the service s/he represents is identified as the Lead Agency;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To participate fully in the site co-ordination activity, including the establishment of a Site Management Plan;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Where another service is the Lead Agency, to ensure that his/her agency's operations are co-ordinated with the other principal response agencies, including ensuring secure communications with all agencies responding to the major emergency at the site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To decide and request the attendance of such services as s/he determines are needed;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To exercise control over such services as s/he has requested to attend;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To operate a Holding Area to which personnel from his/her agency will report on arrival at the site of the major emergency and from which they will be deployed;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To requisition any equipment s/he deems necessary to deal with the incident;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To seek such advice as s/he requires;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To maintain a log of his/her agency's activity at the incident site and decisions made;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To contribute to and ensure information management systems operate effectively; and,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To liaise with his/her principal response agency's Crisis Management Team on the handling of the major emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The **Mandate** of the **On-Site Co-ordinator** is set out below:

	Yes	No
• To assume the role of On-Site Co-ordinator when the three controllers determine the Lead Agency. Once appointed s/he should note the time and that the determination was made in the presence of the two other controllers on site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To inform all parties involved in the response that s/he has assumed the role of On-Site Co-ordinator;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To determine which facility should be used as the On-Site Co-ordination Centre. Depending on the circumstance, this may be a vehicle designated for the task, a specific, purpose-built vehicle, a tent or other temporary structure or an appropriate space/building adjacent to the site, which can be used for coordination purposes;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure involvement of the three principal response agencies and the principal emergency services (and others, as appropriate) in the On-Site Co-ordination Group;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that mandated co-ordination decisions are made promptly and communicated to all involved;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that a Scene Management Plan is made, disseminated to all services and applied;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To develop an auditable list of Actions (an Action Plan) and appoint an Action Management Officer where necessary;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To determine if and what public information messages are to be developed and issued;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that media briefings are co-ordinated;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that pre-arranged communications (technical) links are put in place and operating;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that the information management system is operated, including the capture of data for record-purposes at regular intervals;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that the ownership of the Lead Agency role is reviewed, and modified as appropriate;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that inter-service communication systems have been established, and that communications from site to the Local Co-ordination Centre have been established and are functioning;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To exercise an over-viewing role of all arrangements to mobilise additional resources to the site of the major emergency, and to track the status of mobilisation requests, and deployment of additional resources;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that, where the resources of an individual principal response agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended, support is obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring principal response agencies;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To determine, at an early stage, if ongoing assistance is required from casual volunteers, so that An Garda Síochána's cordoning arrangements can take account of this;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To co-ordinate external assistance into the overall response action plan;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that, where appropriate, pastoral services are mobilised to the site and facilitated by the principal response agencies in their work with casualties;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work with the Health Service Executive Controller to establish the likely nature, dimensions, priorities and optimum location for delivering any psycho-social support that will be required, and how this is to be delivered and integrated with the overall response effort;</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To decide to stand down the major emergency status of the incident at the site, in consultation with the Controllers of Operations, and the Local Co-ordination Group;</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that all aspects of the management of the incident are dealt with before the response is stood down; and,</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the major emergency after it is closed down, and circulated (first as a draft) to the other services that attended.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The **Mandate** of the **Local Co-ordination Group** and **Chair** is set out below:

	Yes	No
• To contact the nominated members of the Local Co-ordination Group and confirm which Local Co-ordination Centre will be used for the major emergency, the time at which the Group will convene and any other arrangements necessary to facilitate the Local Co-ordination Group in performing its functions;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To activate the Local Co-ordination Centre and the appropriate support arrangements required to facilitate the Local Co-ordination Group;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To chair the Local Co-ordination Group and exercise the mandates associated with this position. The Local Co-ordination Group will comprise representatives of the other two principal response agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer, an Action Management Officer, where considered appropriate, Regional Major Emergency representatives of other agencies and specialists as appropriate;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To decide, if necessary, and to declare a regional major emergency;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To activate a Regional Co-ordination Group (if necessary); and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the major emergency after it is closed down, and circulated (first as a draft) to the other services involved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Once it has been activated, the **Mandate** of the **Local Co-ordination Group** is:

	Yes	No
• To establish high level objectives for the situation, and give strategic direction to the response;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To determine and disseminate the overall architecture of response co-ordination;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To anticipate issues arising;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To provide support for the on-site response;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To resolve issues arising from the site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure the generic information management system is operated;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To take over the task of co-ordinating the provision of information for the public as soon as it meets and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To decide and to take action to manage public perceptions of the risks involved, as well as managing the risks, during emergencies that threaten the public;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To co-ordinate and manage all matters relating to the media, other than on-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To establish and maintain links with the Regional Coordination Centre (if involved);	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To establish and maintain links with the lead Government Department/ National Emergency Co-ordination Centre;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To ensure co-ordination of the response activity, other than the on-site element;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To decide on resource and financial provision; and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• To take whatever steps are necessary to start to plan for recovery.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**See Appendix F8 (i.e. Page 34-38) of the Framework for Major Emergency Management for full Details regarding the Decision-Making Mandates**

**Provided (See Following Pages)**

## Appendix F8: Decision-Making Mandates

### Introduction

Mandates, in the context of a major emergency response, establish the envelopes of empowered activity and decision-making to be expected, without references to higher authority. Mandates exist at many levels, including Site, Local, Regional and National. They are assigned to/associated with specific roles, e.g. Controllers of Operations, On-Site Co-ordinator, Chair of Local Co-ordination Group, Chair of Regional Co-ordination Group etc. This Appendix provides further guidance on specific mandates associated with a number of key roles.

The purpose of these mandates is to make explicit the decisions that need to be made at the various levels, and to define how decisions are to be arrived at quickly. When a person in an empowered position makes a decision in accordance with these procedures, each service and each principal response agency should implement those aspects that are within their remit.

Associated with this empowerment is the need for individuals holding key roles to hear the views of colleagues in other principal response agencies, and to use the information management systems as part of the decision-making process. These decision-making mandates do not empower unilateral decision-making until the views of the other agencies have been heard and considered.


An important feature of sound, standing mandates is that they can readily be adjusted to meet the needs of a particular set of major emergency circumstances, needs that are likely to be unexpected.

### Mandate of the Controller of Operations

The Framework provides that each principal response agency should exercise control over its own services operating on the site, and control over services (other than the other principal response agencies) which it mobilises to the site.

For this purpose, each principal response agency should have a Controller of Operations at the site (or at each site) of the major emergency. The officer in command of the initial response of each principal emergency service should be the principal response agency's Controller of Operations until relieved through the agency's pre-determined process.

The Controller of Operations is empowered to make all decisions relating to his/her agency's functions, but must take account of decisions of the On-Site Co-ordination Group in so doing.



The mandate of the Controller of Operations is set out below:


- to make such decisions as are appropriate to the role of controlling the activities of his/her agency's services at the site (Controlling in this context may mean setting priority objectives for individual services; command of each service should remain with the officers of that service.);
- to meet with the other two controllers and determine the lead agency;
- to undertake the role of On-Site Co-ordinator, where the service s/he represents is identified as the lead agency;
- to participate fully in the site co-ordination activity, including the establishment of a Site Management Plan;
- where another service is the lead agency, to ensure that his/her agency's operations are co-ordinated with the other principal response agencies, including ensuring secure communications with all agencies responding to the major emergency at the site;
- to decide and request the attendance of such services as s/he determines are needed;
- to exercise control over such services as s/he has requested to attend;
- to operate a Holding Area to which personnel from his/her agency will report on arrival at the site of the major emergency and from which they will be deployed;
- to requisition any equipment s/he deems necessary to deal with the incident;
- to seek such advice as s/he requires;
- to maintain a log of his/her agency's activity at the incident site and decisions made;
- to contribute to and ensure information management systems operate effectively; and,
- to liaise with his/her principal response agency's Crisis Management Team on the handling of the major emergency.

#### **Mandate of the On-Site Co-ordinator**

The primary mechanism used to deliver co-ordination on site is the arrangement for an On-Site Co-ordinator, provided by the lead agency. As soon as they meet, the three Controllers of Operations should determine which is the lead agency, and thereby establish who is the On-Site Co-ordinator.

The On-Site Co-ordinator will chair the On-Site Co-ordinating Group. In addition to the On-Site Co-ordinator, this group should comprise the Controllers of Operation of the other two agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Officer, an Action Management Officer (where considered appropriate) representatives of other agencies and specialists as appropriate.





While the On-Site Co-ordinator is empowered to make decisions, as set out below, decisions should be arrived at generally by the consensus of the On-Site Co-ordinating Group. Where consensus is not possible, the On-Site Co-ordinator should only make decisions after hearing and considering the views of the other two Controllers.

The mandate of the On-Site Co-ordinator is set out below:


- to assume the role of On-Site Co-ordinator when the three controllers determine the lead agency. Once appointed s/he should note the time and that the determination was made in the presence of the two other controllers on site;
- to inform all parties involved in the response that s/he has assumed the role of On-Site Co-ordinator;
- to determine which facility should be used as the On-Site Co-ordination Centre. Depending on the circumstance, this may be a vehicle designated for the task, a specific, purpose-built vehicle, a tent or other temporary structure or an appropriate space/building adjacent to the site, which can be used for co-ordination purposes;
- to ensure involvement of the three principal response agencies and the principal emergency services (and others, as appropriate) in the On-Site Co-ordination Group;
- to ensure that mandated co-ordination decisions are made promptly and communicated to all involved;
- to ensure that a Scene Management Plan is made, disseminated to all services and applied;
- to develop an auditable list of Actions (an Action Plan) and appoint an Action Management Officer where necessary;
- to determine if and what public information messages are to be developed and issued;
- to ensure that media briefings are co-ordinated;
- to ensure that pre-arranged communications (technical) links are put in place and operating;
- to ensure that the information management system is operated, including the capture of data for record-purposes at regular intervals;
- to ensure that the ownership of the lead agency role is reviewed, and modified as appropriate;
- to ensure that inter-service communication systems have been established, and that communications from site to the Local Co-ordination Centre have been established and are functioning;
- to exercise an over-viewing role of all arrangements to mobilise additional resources to the site of the major emergency, and to track the status of mobilisation requests, and deployment of additional resources;

- to ensure that, where the resources of an individual principal response agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended, support is obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring principal response agencies;
- to determine, at an early stage, if ongoing assistance is required from casual volunteers, so that An Garda Síochána's cordoning arrangements can take account of this;
- to co-ordinate external assistance into the overall response action plan;
- to ensure that, where appropriate, pastoral services are mobilised to the site and facilitated by the principal response agencies in their work with casualties;
- to work with the Health Service Executive Controller to establish the likely nature, dimensions, priorities and optimum location for delivering any psycho-social support that will be required, and how this is to be delivered and integrated with the overall response effort;
- to decide to stand down the major emergency status of the incident at the site, in consultation with the Controllers of Operations, and the Local Co-ordination Group;
- to ensure that all aspects of the management of the incident are dealt with before the response is stood down; and,
- to ensure that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the major emergency after it is closed down, and circulated (first as a draft) to the other services that attended.

#### **Mandate of Local Co-ordination Group and Chair**

The activation of the inter-agency Local Co-ordination Group is a key level of co-ordination. When a major emergency has been declared and the lead agency determined, the mandate of the designated chair of the Local Co-ordination Group is:

- to contact the nominated members of the Local Co-ordination Group and confirm which Local Co-ordination Centre will be used for the major emergency, the time at which the Group will convene and any other arrangements necessary to facilitate the Local Co-ordination Group in performing its functions;
- to activate the Local Co-ordination Centre and the appropriate support arrangements required to facilitate the Local Co-ordination Group;
- to chair the Local Co-ordination Group and exercise the mandates associated with this position. The Local Co-ordination Group will comprise representatives of the other two principal response agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer, an Action Management Officer, where considered appropriate, Regional Major Emergency representatives of other agencies and specialists as appropriate;

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- to decide, if necessary, and to declare a regional major emergency;
  - to activate a Regional Co-ordination Group (if necessary); and
  - to ensure that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the major emergency after it is closed down, and circulated (first as a draft) to the other services involved.

Once it has been activated the mandate of the Local Co-ordination Group is:

- to establish high level objectives for the situation, and give strategic direction to the response;
- to determine and disseminate the overall architecture of response co-ordination;
- to anticipate issues arising;
- to provide support for the on-site response;
- to resolve issues arising from the site;
- to ensure the generic information management system is operated;
- to take over the task of co-ordinating the provision of information for the public as soon as it meets and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available;
- to decide and to take action to manage public perceptions of the risks involved, as well as managing the risks, during emergencies that threaten the public;
- to co-ordinate and manage all matters relating to the media, other than on-site;
- to establish and maintain links with the Regional Coordination Centre (if involved);
- to establish and maintain links with the lead Government Department/National Emergency Co-ordination Centre;
- to ensure co-ordination of the response activity, other than the on-site element;
- to decide on resource and financial provision; and
- to take whatever steps are necessary to start to plan for recovery.

## Appendix L

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### Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

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<b>Ambulance Loading Point</b>	An area, close to the Casualty Clearing Station, where casualties are transferred to ambulances for transport to hospital.
<b>Body Holding Area</b>	An area, under the control of An Garda Síochána, where the dead can be held temporarily until transferred to a Mortuary or Temporary Mortuary.
<b>Business Continuity</b>	The processes and procedures an organisation puts in place to ensure that essential functions can continue during and after an adverse event.
<b>Casualty</b>	Any person killed or injured during the event. (For the purpose of the Casualty Bureau it also includes survivors, missing persons and evacuees).
<b>Casualty Bureau/ Casualty Information Centre</b>	Central contact and information point, operated by An Garda Síochána, for all those seeking or providing information about individuals who may have been involved.
<b>Casualty Clearing Station</b>	The area established at the site by the ambulance service, where casualties are collected, triaged, treated and prepared for evacuation.
<b>Casualty Form</b>	A standard form completed in respect of each casualty and collated in the Casualty Bureau.
<b>Civil Protection</b>	The term used in the European Union to describe the collective approach to protecting populations from a wide range of hazards.
<b>Collaboration</b>	Working jointly on an activity.
<b>Command</b>	The process of directing the operations of all or part of a particular service (or group of services) by giving direct orders.
<b>Control</b>	The process of influencing the activity of a service or group of services, by setting tasks, objectives or targets, without necessarily having the authority to give direct orders.

<b>Controller of Operations</b>	The person given authority by a principal response agency to control all elements of its activities at and about the site.
<b>Co-operation</b>	Working together towards the same end.
<b>Co-ordination</b>	Bringing the different elements of a complex activity or organisation into an efficient relationship through a negotiated process.
<b>Cordons</b>	The designated perimeters of an emergency site, with an Outer Cordon, an Inner Cordon, a Traffic Cordon and a Danger Area Cordon, as appropriate.
<b>Crisis Management Team</b>	A strategic level management group, which consists of senior managers from within the principal response agency, which is assembled to manage a crisis and deal with issues arising for the agency both during the emergency and the subsequent recovery phase.
<b>Danger Area</b>	An area where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel, over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations
<b>Decision Making Mandate</b>	Establishes the envelopes of empowered activity and decision-making to be expected, without references to higher authorities.
<b>Decontamination</b>	A procedure employed to remove hazardous materials from people and equipment.
<b>Emergency Response</b>	The short term measures taken to respond to situations which have occurred.
<b>Evacuation</b>	The process whereby people are directed away from an area where there is danger, whether immediate or anticipated.
<b>Evacuation Assembly Point</b>	A building or area to which evacuees are directed for onward transportation.
<b>Friends and Relatives Reception Centre</b>	A secure area, operated by An Garda Síochána, for the use of friends and relatives arriving at or near the site of the emergency.
<b>Garda Code Instructions</b>	A document containing instructions, legislation, processes and procedures in respect of the day-to-day management of An Garda Síochána.

<b>Hazard</b>	Any phenomenon with the potential to cause direct harm to members of the community, the environment or physical infrastructure, or being potentially damaging to the economic and social infrastructure.
<b>Hazard Identification</b>	A stage in the Risk Assessment process where potential hazards are identified and recorded.
<b>Hazard Analysis</b>	A process by which the hazards facing a particular community, region or country are analysed and assessed in terms of the threat/risk which they pose.
<b>Holding Area</b>	An area at the site, to which resources and personnel, which are not immediately required, are directed to await deployment.
<b>Hospital Casualty Officer</b>	The member of An Garda Síochána responsible for collecting all information on casualties arriving at a receiving hospital.
<b>Impact</b>	The consequences of a hazardous event being realised, expressed in terms of a negative impact on human welfare, damage to the environment or the physical infrastructure or other negative consequences.
<b>Information Management Officer</b>	A designated member of the support team of a Principal Response Agency who has competency/training in the area of information management.
<b>Information Management System</b>	A system for the gathering, handling, use and dissemination of information.
<b>Investigating Agencies</b>	Those organisations with a legal duty to investigate the causes of an event.
<b>Lead Agency</b>	The principal response agency that is assigned the responsibility and mandate for the coordination function.
<b>Likelihood</b>	The probability or chance of an event occurring.
<b>Local Co-ordination Centre</b>	A pre-nominated building, typically at county or sub-county level, with support arrangements in place, and used for meetings of the Local Co-ordination Group.

<b>Local Co-ordination Group</b>	A group of senior representatives from the three principal response agencies (An Garda Síochána, HSE and Local Authority) whose function is to facilitate strategic level co-ordination, make policy decisions, liaise with regional/national level coordination centres, if appropriate, and facilitate the distribution of information to the media and the public.
<b>Major Emergency Management</b>	The range of measures taken under the five stages of the emergency management paradigm.
<b>Major Emergency Plan</b>	A plan prepared by one of the Principal Response Agencies.
<b>Major Emergency</b>	Any event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services, or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the principal emergency services in the area in which the event occurs, and requiring the activation of specific additional procedures to ensure effective, co-ordinated response.
<b>Media Centre</b>	A building/area specifically designated for use by the media, and for liaison between the media and the principal response agencies.
<b>Media Holding Statements</b>	Statements that contain generic information that has been assembled in advance, along with preliminary incident information that can be released in the early stages of the emergency.
<b>Mitigation</b>	A part of risk management and includes all actions taken to eliminate or reduce the risk to people, property and the environment from the hazards which threaten them.
<b>Mutual Aid</b>	The provision of services and assistance by one organisation to another.
<b>National Emergency</b>	A centre designated for inter-departmental co-ordination purposes.
<b>On-Site Coordinator</b>	The person from the lead agency with the role of coordinating the activities of all agencies responding to an emergency.
<b>On-Site Coordination Centre</b>	Specific area/facility at the Site Control Point where the On-Site Co-ordinator is located and the On-Site Coordination Group meet.

<b>On-Site Co-ordination Group</b>	Group that includes the On-Site Co-ordinator and the Controllers of Operations of the other two agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer and others as appropriate.
<b>Operational Level</b>	The level at which the management of hands-on work is undertaken at the incident site(s) or associated areas.
<b>Principal Emergency Services (PES)</b>	The services which respond to normal emergencies in Ireland, namely An Garda Síochána, the Ambulance Service and the Fire Service.
<b>Principal Response Agencies (PRA)</b>	The agencies designated by the Government to respond to Major Emergencies i.e. An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities.
<b>Protocol</b>	A set of standard procedures for carrying out a task or managing a specific situation.
<b>Receiving Hospital</b>	A hospital designated by the Health Service Executive to be a principal location to which major emergency casualties are directed.
<b>Recovery</b>	The process of restoring and rebuilding communities, infrastructure, buildings and services.
<b>Regional Co-ordination Centre</b>	A pre-nominated building, typically at Regional Level, with support arrangements in place and used by the Regional Co-ordination Group.
<b>Regional Co-ordination Group</b>	A group of senior representatives of all relevant principal response agencies, whose function is to facilitate strategic level co-ordination at regional level.
<b>Rendezvous Point (RVP)</b>	The Rendezvous Point is the location to which all resources responding to the emergency site are directed in the first instance. An Garda Síochána will organise the Rendezvous Point. Other services may have one of their officers present to direct responding vehicles into action or to that service's Holding Area.
<b>Response</b>	The actions taken immediately before, during and/or directly after an emergency.
<b>Resilience</b>	The term used to describe the inherent capacity of communities, services and infrastructure to withstand the consequences of an incident, and to recover/restore normality.



<b>Rest Centre</b>	Premises where persons evacuated during an emergency are provided with appropriate welfare and shelter.
<b>Risk</b>	The combination of the likelihood of a hazardous event and its potential impact.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	A systematic process of identifying and evaluating, either qualitatively or quantitatively, the risk resulting from specific hazards.
<b>Risk Holders</b>	Organisations and companies, which own and/or operate facilities and/or services where relevant hazards are found, such as Airlines, Chemical Manufacturers, etc.
<b>Risk Management</b>	Actions taken to reduce the probability of an event occurring or to mitigate its consequences.
<b>Risk Matrix</b>	A matrix of likelihood and impact on which the results of a risk assessment are plotted.
<b>Risk Regulators</b>	Bodies with statutory responsibility for the regulation of activities where there are associated risks, such as the Health and Safety Authority, the Irish Aviation Authority, etc.
<b>Scenario</b>	A hypothetical sequence of events, usually based on real experiences or on a projection of the consequences of hazards identified during the risk assessment process.
<b>SEVESO sites</b>	Industrial sites that, because of the presence of dangerous substances in sufficient quantities, are regulated under Council Directives 96/82/EC and 2003/105/EC, commonly referred to as the Seveso II Directive.
<b>Site Casualty Officer</b>	The member of An Garda Síochána with responsibility for collecting all information on casualties at the site.
<b>Site Control Point</b>	The place at a major emergency site from which the Controllers of Operations control, direct and co-ordinate their organisation's response to the emergency.
<b>Site Medical Officer</b>	The medical officer with overall medical responsibility at the site, who will liaise with the health service Controller of Operations on all issues related to the treatment of casualties.

<b>Site Medical Team</b>	A team drawn from a pre-arranged complement of doctors and nurses, with relevant experience and training, which will be sent to the site, if required.
<b>Site Management Plan</b>	The arrangement of the elements of a typical major emergency site, matched to the terrain of the emergency, as determined by the On-Site Co-ordination Group.
<b>Standard Operating Procedures</b>	Sets of instructions, covering those features of an operation that lend themselves to a definite or standardised procedure, without loss of effectiveness.
<b>Support Team</b>	A pre-designated group formed to support and assist individuals operating in key roles, such as On-Site Co-ordinator, Chair of Local Co-ordination Group, etc.
<b>Strategic Level</b>	The level of management that is concerned with the broader and long-term implications of the emergency and which establishes the policies and framework within which decisions at the tactical level are taken.
<b>Survivor Reception Centre</b>	Secure location to which survivors, not requiring hospital treatment, can be taken for shelter, first aid, interview and documentation.
<b>Tactical Level</b>	The level at which the emergency is managed, including issues such as, allocation of resources, the procurement of additional resources, if required, and the planning and co-ordination of ongoing operations.
<b>Temporary Mortuary</b>	A building or vehicle adapted for temporary use as a mortuary in which post mortem examinations can take place.
<b>Triage</b>	A process of assessing casualties and deciding the priority of their treatment and/or evacuation.

## Acronyms

<b>AAIU</b>	Air Accident Investigation Unit
<b>CCBRN</b>	Conventional Explosive, Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear
<b>CMT</b>	Crisis Management Team
<b>EOD</b>	Explosives Ordnance Disposal
<b>ICG</b>	Irish Coast Guard
<b>METHANE</b>	<b>Major Emergency Declared</b> <b>Exact Location of the emergency</b> <b>Type of Emergency (Transport, Chemical etc)</b> <b>Hazards present and potential</b> <b>Access/egress routes</b> <b>Number and Types of Casualties</b> <b>Emergency services present and required</b>
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NEPNA</b>	National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents
<b>NOTAM</b>	Notice to Airmen
<b>PDF</b>	Permanent Defence Forces
<b>PES</b>	Principle Emergency Services
<b>PRA</b>	Principle Response Agency
<b>RVP</b>	Rendezvous Point
<b>SAR</b>	Search and Rescue
<b>SLA</b>	Service Level Agreement
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>VIP</b>	Very Important Person

**See Appendix F3 (i.e. Page 10) of the Framework for Major Emergency Management for full Details regarding Glossary of Terms and Acronyms**

## Appendix V

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### Major Emergency Management – Frequently asked Questions

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#### **What is Major Emergency Management?**

Major Emergency Management is the name given in Ireland to the process by which the relevant statutory agencies prepare for and respond to the major adverse events which can affect communities, infrastructure and/or the environment. In other countries this process is known by a variety of names, such as, Civil Protection, Major Incident Planning, Disaster Planning, etc.

#### **What types of major adverse events are involved in Major Emergency Management?**

The major adverse events involved in Major Emergency Management include explosions, major fires, aircraft, train and bus crashes, chemical and other hazardous substance incidents, as well as, flooding, storms and other forms of severe weather. Examples include the Bantry Bay Ship Explosion/Fire (1979), the Buttevant Rail Crash (1980), the Stardust Fire (1981), the Cherryville Rail Crash (1983) and the Air India Disaster (1985)

#### **What is the Framework for Major Emergency Management?**

The Framework for Major Emergency Management is a framework of policies, structures and arrangements for preparedness and response to Major Emergencies at the local and regional levels, which was agreed by the Government and issued in September, 2006.

#### **What is a Major Emergency?**

The Framework defines a Major Emergency as any event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the Principal Emergency Services in the area in which the event occurs, and requires the activation of specific additional procedures and the mobilisation of additional resources to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response.

#### **Did the 2006 Framework replace a previous version?**

The 2006 Framework replaced an earlier Framework which came into effect in 1984. The present Framework was issued on September 12th, 2006, with a two year development programme. The new plans, arrangement and structures set out in the Framework came into effect on September 30th, 2008.

#### **What is the purpose of the Framework?**

In developed nations, such as Ireland, the public expects that the relevant statutory agencies will respond quickly and effectively to protect people, property, infrastructure and the environment whenever a Major Emergency occurs. The purpose of the Framework is to enable Divisions of An Garda Síochána, Regions of the Health Service Executive and Local Authorities (known in the Framework as the Principal Response Agencies) to prepare for and make a co-ordinated response to any Major Emergency which occurs in their area.

#### **What are the Principal Emergency Services?**

The Principal Emergency Services are the blue light services which respond to normal emergencies on a day to day basis, namely An Garda Síochána, the Ambulance Service and the Fire Service. A fourth Principal Emergency Service, the Irish Coast Guard, is responsible for the initiation, control and co-ordination of maritime emergencies in the Irish territorial waters, harbours and coastline. The Principal Response Services are normally the first services to respond to major emergencies.

#### **What are the Principal Response Agencies?**

The Principal Response Agencies (An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities) are the agencies which have been designated by Government to respond to Major Emergencies. Each Principal Emergency Service is part of a larger Principal Response Agency, eg, the Fire Service is a Local Authority service. Due to the nature and complexity of Major Emergencies, the staff and resources of the wider agency are required, both to manage the consequences and

aftermath of the Major Emergency event and to co-ordinate its response with the responses of the other agencies.

### **How is the response to a Major Emergency organised under the Framework?**

The Framework provides for an overall, combined response by the Principal Response Agencies (PRAs) as soon as a Major Emergency is Declared. Any one of the PRAs may Declare a Major Emergency and the Major Emergency Plans of all local PRAs are activated immediately once they are notified of the Declaration.

### **What is a Major Emergency Plan?**

Major emergencies require special arrangements to ensure a co-ordinated and effective response by the PRAs. Each PRA has a Major Emergency Plan that sets out the detail of that agency's response, as well as its contribution to the combined response of all of the agencies. Similar plans are in place in An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and Local Authorities and these plans are reviewed on a regular basis.

### **Does the Framework deal with the detail of each agency's response?**

The functions and responsibilities of each Principal Response Agency in a Major Emergency situation are set out in the Framework, so as to ensure that the overall response to a Major Emergency is both comprehensive and co-ordinated. However, the Framework does not, and is not intended to, address the detailed response procedures of the different agencies. Each agency is required to develop its own procedures and arrangements on which its response to specific incidents or hazards (such as flooding or the release of a dangerous chemical) are built.

### **Is the Framework supported by legislation?**

There is no specific legislation in this country on Major Emergency Management; each PRA operates during an emergency response under its own legislative process. The main Framework document was adopted by Government decision and is signed by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Minister Health and Children and the Minister Justice Equality and Law Reform.

The Framework is designed primarily to provide for the protection, support and welfare of the public in times of emergency. Effective arrangements to ensure public safety in times of emergency also have the benefit of helping to safeguard the environment, the economy, infrastructure and property.

The Framework aims to ensure that local PRAs are in a position to respond to emergencies, and that these responses can be scaled up to regional level, if required, and link with the national level, so as to ensure that essential services (food, water, transport, health, etc.) keep operating.

The Framework builds on current strengths and makes full use of the core competencies and organisational strengths of the PRAs as the basis of any response.

### **How does the Framework achieve this?**

The Framework sets out arrangements which facilitate the Principal Emergency Services in scaling-up the response required, so as to utilise the full resources of each of the Principal Response Agencies, and to work together in the management of large-scale incidents, be it major transportation accidents, severe weather, etc.

The Framework also sets out arrangements by which other services, such as the Defence Forces, voluntary emergency services, utilities, transport companies, industrial and other participants, and not least the communities affected, can support and work with the PRAs in reacting to and managing Major Emergencies.

### **Does the Framework align with international best practice?**

The inter-agency group which prepared the Framework began its work by considering the available research on best international practice in the area of Major Emergency Management. To reinforce this process, international consultants, OCTO, were retained to provide expert input as well as external oversight of the entire process.

### **How does the Framework reflect international best practice?**

The Framework reflects international best practice in a number of ways. In particular, the Framework adopts two key, internationally recognised, components of successful Major Emergency Management, ie, the All Hazards approach and the Systems approach. The Framework also places a major emphasis on the importance of co-ordination. This emphasis on co-ordination is in contrast to a more traditional “command” approach which, although adequate and appropriate in the context of a single service, is no longer considered best practice in a multi-agency response.

### **What is the All Hazards approach to Major Emergency Management?**

The All Hazards approach is based on the fact that there are common features to the response to a Major Emergency, regardless of its origin. Therefore, planning and preparedness are concentrated on the predictable and common consequences of Major Emergencies.

### **What is the Systems approach to Major Emergency Management?**

The Systems approach involves a continuous cycle of activity beginning with risk assessment; leading to planning and the development of preparedness, based on likely scenarios; leading to response, whenever a Major Emergency occurs; followed by recovery and a review, which feeds back into the process of planning and the development of preparedness.

### **What are the main elements of the Major Emergency Planning/Preparedness process?**

- Hazard Analysis and Risk Assessment
- Mitigation of Risk and Risk Management
- Preparation of Major Emergency Plans
- Identification and training of individuals to play key roles in response
- The holding of exercises
- Appraisal and Review

This is a cyclical process which is designed to continually improve the level of preparedness of local PRAs so that in the event that a Major Emergency occurs, the response is the best possible in the circumstances.

### **What is co-ordination and in what way is it different from command?**

Co-ordination is a process by which the different elements of a complex activity are brought into an efficient working relationship through a negotiated process. Command is a process of directing the operations of a service, or group of services, by giving direct orders.

### **What are the main elements of co-ordination during the response to a Major Emergency?**

In the Framework the co-ordination function is recognised as including:

- Ensuring that information on the nature of the emergency situation is shared between all responding organisations
- Ensuring that co-ordination (ie, inter-agency) decisions are made promptly and communicated to all involved
- Ensuring that public information messages and media briefings are co-ordinated
- Ensuring that all aspects of the management of the incident are dealt with before the response is stood down

### **Why is co-ordination so important?**

International research on the response to Major Emergencies makes it clear that the co-ordination of all of the services involved is a vital component of a successful response. The Framework recognises this co-ordination as a specific function and assigns responsibility for it clearly and unambiguously to the Lead Agency. Having all agencies working to common objectives is the key.

### **What is the Lead Agency?**

The Lead Agency in any Major Emergency situation is the PRA which has both the responsibility and

the mandate to deliver on the co-ordination function, not only at the site, but also at any other locations where inter-agency groups are meeting.

### **How is the Lead Agency decided?**

Table 7.1 of Appendix F7 of the Framework provides a list of Lead Agencies for most common incident types, and this is the primary basis for determining the Lead Agency. However, in the event of an incident where the categorisations in Table 7.1 do not seem to apply and the Lead Agency is not obvious, the Local Authority will be the default agency. As soon as they meet at the site, the Controllers of Operations of the responding PRAs should determine which is the Lead Agency, based on these criteria.

Note: The Lead Agency role may, in certain circumstances, change over time and the methods for doing this are set out in Appendix F7.

### **How does the Framework assist co-ordination?**

One of the main benefits of the Framework is that it establishes simple co-ordination structures and processes at the site and away from the site, which enable inter-agency issues to be decided quickly at the most appropriate level.

### **Does the Framework deal with “National Emergencies”?**

The Framework is primarily concerned with preparing for and responding to local and regional emergencies. However, the Framework recognises that local and regional emergencies can have national implications. For that reason, the Framework establishes arrangements by which the planning and response processes at both the national level and the regional/local level are closely linked. For example, relevant Government Departments are notified whenever a Major Emergency occurs, so that the national dimension can be managed.

The Framework also makes provision so that, in certain situations, such as the activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents (NEPNA), regional and local response groups can be activated in a top-down way.

### **Is terminology important in Major Emergency Management?**

The use of consistent terminology is a critical component of successful communication in a multi-agency context, such as Major Emergency Management. The use of incorrect terminology causes confusion and has the potential to seriously undermine inter-agency working from the beginning of a response.

### **What is the Framework’s approach to terminology?**

The Framework sets out a common terminology in Major Emergency Management which is designed to facilitate co-ordinated and safe working. This terminology is summarised in a Glossary of Terms in Appendix F3 of the Framework.

### **Can there be different types of Major Emergency?**

Traditionally, planning for Major Emergencies was largely concerned with “Big Bang” type events, such as aircraft accidents, train crashes, major fires, explosions, and the release of hazardous substances. However, Major Emergencies can also arise from “Rising Tide” type events, such as escalating severe weather, or an infectious disease outbreak, where an initial emergency situation can, over a period of time, transform into a Major Emergency. For example, a flooding emergency could become a Major Emergency either because of the increased severity of the flooding and/or the length of time for which it continues and/or the size of the area affected.

### **Who decides that a Major Emergency has occurred?**

Each Principal Response Agency has personnel authorised and trained to decide that a Major Emergency has occurred and “Declare a Major Emergency”. These are known as Authorised Officers.

### **How is a Major Emergency Declared?**

When a Principal Response Agency becomes aware that a serious event has occurred, information on the nature and scale of the event is collected as quickly as possible. This information is considered

by an Authorised Officer (who may or may not be at the site) and if, in his/her opinion, the event satisfies the definition of a Major Emergency, s/he Declares that a Major Emergency exists.

### **Can there be issues in some situations with the decision to Declare or not Declare a Major Emergency?**

In some situations Authorised Officers may hesitate to Declare a Major Emergency, even though such a Declaration might well be justified by the circumstances, because of an understandable concern that the Declaration of a Major Emergency can have consequences across many services (including, for example, hospitals) and that an inappropriate Declaration may reflect poorly on the service involved. In all circumstances the decision to Declare a Major Emergency is taken on the basis of the best available information on the expected impact of the event and the resources available to respond. However, in situations where further information becomes available and it becomes clear that, on balance, a Major Emergency should not have been Declared, it can be stood down without significant consequences.

### **Can there be particular issues with Declaring a Major Emergency during a “Rising Tide” type event?**

A “Rising Tide” type emergency can continue over an extended period (days or weeks) and, in such a situation, it is not always easy to define exactly the point at which the event moves “beyond the normal capabilities of the Principal Emergency Services in the area” and becomes a Major Emergency. In many such situations, PRAs may decide that, although stretched, they are not overwhelmed. Also, in situations where the relevant co-ordination structures have been activated, the primary benefits of a Declaration may already have been achieved.

### **Do Severe Weather type emergencies present particular problems for the PRAs?**

With most “Big Bang” type Major Emergencies there is a defined event, which occurs at a particular location and at a particular time, and, once these details are known to the PRAs, a Major Emergency response can be initiated and organised. In contrast, most severe weather emergencies tend to develop across a wide area over an extended period of time and thus the extent of the impact is not always immediately obvious. Furthermore, with a severe weather event, the capacity of the PRAs and the Principal Emergency Service to provide normal services, as well as responding to the emergency, can be severely compromised by the event itself, for example, transport difficulties on icy roads, services displaced from flooded buildings, etc.

### **Can the principles, arrangements and structures of the Framework be used outside of Major Emergency situations?**

The Framework makes it clear that the arrangements and structures set out in the Framework can and should be activated and used in all emergencies, even where a Major Emergency has not been declared. This approach proved extremely useful during the severe weather events of 2010, where Major Emergency arrangements and structures were used successfully, even though a Major Emergency had not been declared.

### **What is the role of the Defence Forces in the response to a Major Emergency?**

The Framework recognises that the Defence Forces can provide significant support to the Principal Response Agencies during the response to a Major Emergency and sets out detailed arrangement for requesting Defence Forces assistance and the integration of the Defence Forces into the response arrangements.

### **What is the difference between the Defence Forces providing “Aid to the Civil Power” and “Aid to the Civil Authority”?**

The major distinguishing feature between the two types of aid is that the Defence Forces response to requests for “Aid to the Civil Power” is primarily an armed response while the Defence Forces response to requests for “Aid to the Civil Authority” is unarmed.

### **What role can the Voluntary Organisations perform in the response to a Major Emergency?**

The Framework recognises that there are a number of voluntary organisations which may be called on to assist the PRAs in responding to a Major Emergency. These include Civil Defence, the Irish Red Cross, the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, the St. John Ambulance Brigade of Ireland, Mountain Rescue Teams, Cave Rescue Teams, Search and Rescue Dog Associations, River Rescue Units,



Community Inshore Rescue Units, the RNLI, Sub Aqua Units, etc. The Framework recommends that each PRA should provide for the inclusion of relevant voluntary emergency services to be part of, and to work in, the response to a Major Emergency.

### **Does the Declaration of a Major Emergency have legal implications?**

The Declaration of a Major Emergency has no direct legal implications. In other countries, the Declaration of a Disaster can have specific consequences, in accordance with the relevant legislation, typically triggering the release of funds and/or the coming into force of emergency powers. For example, in the United States, under the Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, a State Governor can request the President to Declare a Disaster and this Declaration triggers supplementary Federal assistance. There is no such implication in Ireland.

### **What happens once a Major Emergency is Declared?**

The Authorised Officer of a PRA who Declares a Major Emergency will first notify that PRA's Communication Centre, using a standard message format and will provide all available information using a METHANE message.

The Communications Centre will activate the PRA's Major Emergency Plan and notify the two other relevant PRAs of the Declaration of the Major Emergency, providing all available information using a METHANE message.

Each Principal Response Agency will respond to the activation of its Major Emergency Plan in a manner appropriate to the nature and scale of the Major Emergency. For a typical "Big Bang" type event this will usually include:

- The despatch of extra resources to the site
- The activation of the agency Crisis Management Team
- The activation of resources away from the site (such as hospitals)
- The notification of the Parent Government Department

### **What is a METHANE Message?**

A METHANE message is a standard information message, issued after a Major Emergency has been Declared, as follows:

M A Major Emergency has been declared  
E Exact location of the emergency  
T Type of emergency (Transport, Chemical, etc)  
H Hazards, both present and potential  
A Access and egress routes  
N Number of types of casualties  
E Emergency services, both present and required

### **What is the difference between a METHANE message and an ETHANE message?**

An ETHANE message is essentially a METHANE message without the first line. A METHANE message is used in situations where a Major Emergency has been Declared by an Authorised Officer. An ETHANE message is used to structure and deliver information, for example to an Authorised Officer, before a Major Emergency has been Declared.

### **Who is "in charge" at a Major Emergency site?**

Responsibility at the site of a Major Emergency for the co-ordination of all activities (and the delivery of an efficient and effective response) lies with an inter-agency group known as the On-Site Co-ordination Group. This group consists of the Controllers of Operations of the three PRAs and is chaired by the Controller of the Lead Agency, who acts as On-Site Co-ordinator.

At the site of a Major Emergency, therefore, the Controllers of Operations of the three PRAs come together as quickly as possible to form the On-Site Co-ordination Group.

### **What is the role of the On-Site Co-ordinator?**

The On-Site Co-ordinator has responsibility for the co-ordination function (in addition to his/her own functions as a PRA Controller) including:

- Ensuring that there is sharing of information between the three PRAs and the Principal Emergency Services
- Ensuring that co-ordination decisions are made promptly and communicated to all involved
- Ensuring that Site Management issues are addressed and decided
- Ensuring that public information messages and media briefings are co-ordinated and implemented
- Operating the generic Information Management System
- Ensuring that all aspects of the incident are dealt with before the response is shut down and
- Ensuring that a post incident report on the co-ordination function is prepared.

### **Can the On-Site Co-ordinator take decisions on inter-agency issues?**

To facilitate co-ordination, the On-Site Co-ordinator is empowered to make certain decisions, but the Framework makes it clear that these decisions should generally be arrived at by a consensus of the On-Site Co-ordination Group. Where consensus is not possible, the On-Site Co-ordinator should only make decisions after hearing and considering the views of the other two Controllers.

### **What is a PRA Controller of Operations?**

Apart from inter-agency co-ordination issues, each Principal Response Agency exercises command and control over its own resources at the site of a Major Emergency and a Controller of Operations is designated by each PRA to discharge this function. At the start of an incident, the most senior officer at the site will usually act as Controller of Operations for his/her PRA, until relieved by a more senior officer.

### **What is the role of the Controller of Operations?**

The Controller of Operations controls the activities of all of his/her PRAs resources at the site; participates in the On-Site Co-ordination Group with the Controllers of Operations of the other two PRAs; requests the attendance of such extra resources as are deemed necessary for the response (including resources from outside the PRA); and keeps the PRA's Crisis Management Team briefed on the handling of the emergency at the site.

### **How is the response away from the site managed?**

Away from the site, the inter-agency response is managed by a Local Co-ordination Group, where representatives of the relevant PRAs meet to provide strategic level management for the immediate, medium and long term consequences of the incident. This group is chaired by the senior representative of the Lead Agency.

At the same time, the response of individual PRAs is managed by their internal Crisis Management Teams.

### **Where does the Local Co-ordination Group meet?**

In each Local Authority area at least one Local Co-ordination Centre has been fitted out for use by the Local Co-ordination Group. Most of these centres are located in Local Authority buildings, but they are used by the Local Co-ordination Group, regardless of which PRA assumes the role of Lead Agency.

### **How is the Local Co-ordination Group mobilised?**

When a Major Emergency has been declared and the Lead Agency is agreed at the site, the Controller of Operations of the Lead Agency will inform his/her headquarters of that decision and the relevant officers of the Lead Agency will begin to activate the designated Local Co-ordination Centre and mobilise the Local Co-ordination Group.

### **Who attends meetings of the Local Co-ordination Group?**

When the Lead Agency informs the two other PRAs that the Local Co-ordination Group is to meet, the Crisis Management Teams of these PRAs will nominate appropriate officers to represent them at meetings of the group. These officers will be joined by the representatives of the Lead Agency, as

well as support staff from the Lead Agency, including an Information Management Officer and a Media Liaison Officer. (Note: the first meeting of the group may be held by teleconference). The representatives of other agencies, who are involved in the incident, as well as appropriate specialists, may also be requested to attend meetings of the group.

### **What is the Role of the Local Co-ordination Group?**

In general the role of the Local Co-ordination Group is to:

- Establish high level objectives and a strategic direction for the response
- Anticipate issues arising
- Ensure co-ordination of the response activity away from the site
- Provide support for the on-site response
- Resolve issues arising from the site
- Take over the task of providing information for the public
- Co-ordinate and manage all matters relating to the media (other than on site)
- Establish and maintain links with the lead Government Department/National Co-ordination Centre
- Commence planning for recovery.

### **When will a Regional Co-ordination Group be activated?**

In certain circumstances, the Framework provides that the local response to a Major Emergency may be scaled up to a regional level or where:

- The resources available in the local area (generally, a county or city) do not appear to be sufficient
- The consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside the local area
- The incident is spread over more than one Local Authority or Garda area and/or
- The incident occurs at or close to the boundary of several PRAs.

In such a situation, the Local Co-ordination Group may be expanded by inviting in representatives from other PRAs and in this way a Local Co-ordination Group becomes a Regional Co-ordination Group

### **How is the local response linked to the national level?**

In every situation where a Major Emergency is declared, each PRA is required to inform its parent department of the declaration. Once they are so informed, the three parent departments of the PRAs (Justice and Law Reform, Health and Children, and Environment, Heritage and Local Government) consult and agree on which Government Department will be designated as the Lead Department, in accordance with Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance of the Office of Emergency Planning. (Note: the Lead Department will not always be one of the parent departments of the PRAs).

When designated, the Lead Department is responsible for activating its own internal emergency/crisis management arrangements and making contact with the relevant Local Co-ordination Group, which will provide a briefing on the situation.

The Lead Department has responsibility for providing information on the emergency to other Government Departments and, where necessary, activating an Interdepartmental Emergency Response Co-ordination Group at the National Emergency Co-ordination Centre, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

### **What is a PRA Crisis Management Team?**

A Crisis Management Team is a strategic level management group within a PRA which is assembled during a Major Emergency to:

- Provide support to the agency's Controller of Operations - on site
- Provide support to the Agency's Local Co-ordination Team – County Hall
- Mobilise resources from within the agency, or externally, as requested

### **What is the Information Management System?**

The Framework recognises that the quality of the information that is presented to decision makers during a Major Emergency is a key determinant of outcome. To this end, the Framework establishes a standard Information Management System and nominated individuals in all PRAs have been trained to operate this system.

The system is inherently simple and uses four standard boards on which are set out:

- The **Recognised Current Situation**
- The **Key Issues**, against which the overall response needs to be constantly assessed
- The **Strategic Aim** and **Priority Items**, that must be actioned in order to meet the aim; and
- The **Actions** that have been decided on in order to bring the situation under control

The Information Management System is used at meetings of all groups involved in the response to a Major Emergency, including the On-Site Co-ordination Group, the Local Co-ordination Group and the Crisis Management Teams.





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Approved By:	Laois County Council's Major Emergency Management Committee (M.E.M.C)

### Record of Issues and Amendments

Amendment No.	Version No.	Date	Section Amended	Amended By
	<i>0.1</i>	<i>Draft 2007</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Shea Brennan</i>
	<i>0.2</i>	<i>Draft 2008</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Shea Brennan</i>
	<i>0.3</i>	<i>Final Draft 2008</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Shea Brennan</i>
	1.0	September 2008	All	Shea Brennan
1.	2.0	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	Appendix (Full)	Shea Brennan
2.	3.0	March 2009	Appendix	Shea Brennan
3.	4.0	February 2010	Appendix (Full)	Shea Brennan
4.	5.0	February 2011	All	Shea Brennan
5.	6.0	February 2012	All	Shea Brennan
6.	7.0	February 2013	All	Shea Brennan
7.	8.0	May 2014	All	Shea Brennan
8.	9.0	March 2015	All	Shea Brennan
9.	10.0	July 2017	All	Shea Brennan
10.	11.0	June 2019	All	Padraic Keely
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