



MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN

Version 10.0

Part 5.5

Media and Public Warning and Informing Plan

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL
ARGYLE ROAD, SEVENOAKS, KENT. TN13 1HG

Emergency Planning Officer - Jeff Seear
Phone 01732 227000 Ext. 7303
DDI 01732 227303
Fax 01732 227176 or 0870 1914826
e-mail jeff.seear@sevenoaks.gov.uk
emergency.planning@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Web www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/emergencyplanning

This document is un-controlled. Please ensure you have the most up-to-date copy.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- Kent Resilience Forum Public Warning & Informing Strategy
- Kent Resilience Forum Communications Plan

Part 5.5 - Media and Public Warning & Informing Plan

| <u>Contents</u> | Page |
|---|------|
| 1.0 – Public Information – The Media Plan | 2 |
| 1.1 – General | 2 |
| 1.2 – Public Awareness (Before The Event) | 4 |
| 1.3 – Public Warning (During The Event) | 4 |
| 1.4 - Informing & Advising The Public (After The Event) | 6 |
| 1.5 – Training & Exercising | 6 |
| 2.0 – Reporting | 6 |
| 3.0 – Translation & Interpreting | 6 |
| 3.1 – General | 6 |
| 3.2 – Available Languages | 6 |
| 3.3 – Accessing The Service | 6 |
| 3.3.1 – If The Client Is With You | 7 |
| 3.3.2 – Making Outgoing Calls | 7 |
| 3.3.3 – Handling Incoming Client Calls | 8 |
| 3.4 – Translation Services | 8 |

1.0 – PUBLIC INFORMATION – THE MEDIA PLAN

1.1 - GENERAL

See also Section 6 of the *Pan-Kent Strategic Emergency Framework*

There are three main phases of the public information programme:

1. PUBLIC AWARENESS (before the event):
 - Informing and educating the public about risks and preparedness
2. PUBLIC WARNING (during the event):
 - alerting by all appropriate means the members of a community whose immediate safety is at risk
3. INFORMING AND ADVISING THE PUBLIC (after the event) (immediate and long-term post-event):
 - providing relevant and timely information about the nature of the unfolding event –
 - immediate actions being taken by responders to minimise the risk to human or animal health and welfare, the environment or property;
 - actions being taken by responders to assist the recovery phase;
 - actions the public themselves can take to minimise the impact of the emergency;
 - how further information can be obtained; and
 - end of emergency and return to normal arrangements.

There is a duty under the *Civil Contingencies Act* not to alarm the public unnecessarily either in the publication of the risk assessments and plans in advance or in the warnings and information given during and after an incident.

In all phases, consideration will have to be given as to how to provide warnings and information to people who are deaf, hearing impaired, blind or visually impaired. Similarly, consideration will have to be given as to how to provide warnings and information to people for whom English is not their first language.

To avoid confusion and duplication, the regulations to the *Civil Contingencies Act* (CCA) suggest that the responders to an emergency agree for one agency to take the lead responsibility for maintaining arrangements to warn the public. As the incident progresses, this lead can move from one agency to another, by agreement. The lead responder will need to collaborate with the other responders in fulfilling this role.

Emergency Preparedness CCA (Annex 7B) identifies a range of possible incident types and suggests the most likely organisation to take on the lead responsibility in the early stages of the event. For example, for severe weather causing flooding, the Met Office issues weather warnings and the Environment Agency issues flood warnings. For terrorist incidents, the Police lead the warning.

In this schedule, local authorities generally are suggested for the lead for the following event types:

- Major incidents in schools (a Kent County Council function and therefore a County Council lead)
- Earthquakes
- Satellite incidents

For most other event types, the local authority is an 'Additional Organisation' for informing and advising the public.

Vulnerable persons living in the community are difficult to contact. General advice to the public to adopt a 'good neighbour' approach to help those less able to help themselves is always advisable; but specific efforts will sometimes be needed to deliver alerts to those vulnerable persons.

Regard should be given to the different audiences receiving the warnings and information that are being issued.

- Casualties and other possible victims
 - Survivors – those in the immediate vicinity and directly affected, possibly as wounded casualties.
 - Those close by who may need to take action to avoid further harm.
- Local people, friends and relatives
 - Those in the area who may be disrupted by the consequences of the emergency and the clear-up process.
 - Those who are not affected directly but know or are related to those who might be.
- The wider audience
 - Those who are not affected but are concerned or alarmed about wider implications, or simply interested.
 - The news media.

This section will need to be amended in due course as a result of the development of protocols by the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) and the Regional Media Emergency Forum (RMEF).

1.2 – PUBLIC AWARENESS (Before the event)

The public awareness programme will be dependant on the Community Risk Register (CRR) in terms of informing the public about specific risks. The Community Risk Register will also have a bearing on the formulation of generic information, although this may be provided by others, in particular the Preparing for Emergencies website (www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk).

Regard will have to be given to the policy on the publishing of information and the Council's Freedom of Information policy.

1.3 – PUBLIC WARNING (During the event)

The media response to a major emergency is likely to include a fast deployment of a huge amount of resources, including reporters, producers, camera crews, photographers, technical staff and all their vehicles. Although often seen as intrusive, the media do have a legitimate presence to report the incident.

The media strategy for the incident is to be agreed with the other responding agencies initially through Strategic Coordinating Group.

Clearly the media have needs so that they can perform their job effectively and if it is possible to anticipate these needs they are more likely to be co-operative when asked to reciprocate by helping with the Council's information dissemination needs.

To provide for the media, it is desirable (in coordination with the Strategic Coordinating Group) to rapidly establish rendezvous points and vantage points. In some cases a Media Centre may be required. This should be in suitable premises reasonably close to the incident scene. Similarly, arrangements will have to be made to accommodate a potentially large number of media vehicles.

At incident scenes where access is restricted or where no appropriate vantage points can be provided, it may be useful to invite the media to nominate pools under their well-established pooling arrangements.

There will inevitably be resourcing problems and in the early phases, particularly the first 24 hours, additional press officers may be made available from the Government News Network (GNN).

The Communications Team should, as far as is practical, use their established relationships with the local media to ensure effective co-operation. It will be important for the Council to make people available for interviews and liaison with the media. These people should preferably be appropriately trained in media matters. Normally this will be a role for Cabinet Members who are spokespeople for the Council and have received media training (members of the Management Team have also received similar training). However, if non-trained officers find themselves in a position where they have to talk to the media, there are two models that can be used to make a statement:

1. The 3Ps
 - Pity – show sympathy for the victims
 - Praise – for the responders
 - Promise – that something will be done to make things better/ensure that it can't happen again
2. EARS
 - Emotion - show sympathy for the victims
 - Action – we are doing something URGENTLY
 - Reassurance
 - Scale – put into some kind of context

If possible, the Communications Team will nominate someone (not necessarily from the Communications Team) to monitor the media, particularly the broadcast news, so that timely corrections can be issued if required and to try to anticipate issues that may be brought up through the media.

For a major incident, there will probably be VIP visits to be accommodated. Again, this should be co-ordinated through Strategic Coordinating Group so that the VIP can be adequately briefed before answering media questions.

See also *Connecting in a Crisis – A guide to working with the BBC during an emergency* – BBC Nations & Regions.

1.4 - INFORMING AND ADVISING THE PUBLIC (After the event)

The information and advice provided after the event would be determined by the Rehabilitation Management Team (RMT) in conjunction with the other responders. See *Part 10 – Recovery*.

Consideration must be given to the requirements of the Data Protection Act policy and the Freedom of Information Act policy of the Council.

1.5 – TRAINING AND EXERCISING

There will be a requirement to provide training and exercises in respect of the media arrangements. To simulate the pressures placed on the organisation during an emergency, it may be desirable to involve the media in emergency exercises.

2.0 – REPORTING

If requested, reports may be required for the Cabinet, Committees and Elected Members of Sevenoaks District Council.

Depending on the nature and scale of the incident, reports may be required to be sent to the Kent County Council Emergency Planning Unit (KCC EPU), the Government Office for the South East (GOSE), the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) or for other Government Departments.

3.0 – TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING

3.1 – GENERAL

Sevenoaks District Council is a subscriber to the Language Line interpreting and translation service provided by Language Line Ltd.

Interpreters are available at any time. To access the service, a Customer ID code is needed and this is shown in Section 11 of the *Emergency Directory*.

3.2 – AVAILABLE LANGUAGES

Over 170 languages are available

3.3 – ACCESSING THE SERVICE

The following instructions are available on the Sevenoaks District Council intranet (Simon) under *Chief Executives>Communications>Our documentation*

3.3.1 – IF THE CLIENT IS WITH YOU

1. Identify the language required. If required, use the language identification card or poster, if available
2. Phone the number as shown in Section 11 of the *Emergency Directory*.
3. The operator will ask for your:
 - ID Code (see Section 3.1 above) (shown in Section 11 of the *Emergency Directory*)
 - Organisation name - Sevenoaks District Council
 - Your initial and surname
 - Your required language – say if you need a specific interpreter (e.g. a female interpreter)
 - The client's location (i.e. with you)
3. Stay on the line while the operator connects you to a trained interpreter (about 30 seconds)
4. Note the interpreter's ID code. Introduce yourself; brief the interpreter; say what sort of phone you are using (single/dual handset, speaker phone, mobile, conference call)
5. Ask the interpreter to introduce you and themselves to the client and give the interpreter your first question or statement. Give the interpreter time to interpret between you and the client. Continue the conversation.
6. Let your client and the interpreter know when you have finished.

3.3.2 – MAKING OUTGOING CALLS

The Language Line operator will connect you to an interpreter, then conference your client into the call

1. Have your client's name and phone number ready
2. Phone the number as shown in Section 11 of the *Emergency Directory*.
3. The operator will ask for your:
 - ID Code (see Section 3.1 above) (shown in Section 11 of the *Emergency Directory*)
 - Organisation name - Sevenoaks District Council
 - Your initial and surname
 - Your required language – say if you need a specific interpreter (e.g. a female interpreter)
 - The client's location (i.e. NOT with you)
4. Give the operator your client's name and phone number
5. Stay on the line while the operator connects you to a trained interpreter (about 30 seconds)
6. Note the interpreter's ID code. Introduce yourself; brief the interpreter; explain the operator is phoning your client. Ask the interpreter to introduce you and himself or herself to the client and give the interpreter your first question or statement.
7. The operator introduces your client to the call; the interpreter proceeds as you directed above.
8. Give the interpreter time to interpret between you and the client. Continue the conversation.
9. Let your client and the interpreter know when you have finished.

3.3.3 – HANDLING INCOMING CLIENT CALLS

On the District Council office phone system (Meridian), use the conference call facility.

1. Try to obtain the client's phone number in case they hang up while on hold
2. Dial R (or Recall) then dial the phone the number as shown in Part 11 of the *Emergency Directory*
3. The operator will ask for your:
 - ID Code (see Section 3.1 above) (shown in Section 11 of the *Emergency Directory*)
 - Organisation name - Sevenoaks District Council
 - Your initial and surname
 - Your required language – say if you need a specific interpreter (e.g. a female interpreter)
 - The client's location (i.e. ON HOLD)
4. Brief the interpreter
5. Dial R (or Recall) to conference the client into the call
6. Give the interpreter time to interpret between you and the client. Continue the conversation.
7. Let your client and the interpreter know when you have finished.

3.4 – TRANSLATION SERVICES

The translation of documents (either received or to be sent out) can also be translated by Language Line Ltd. Or by another service provider. Please contact the Communications Team if you need to use this service.

Details of translation service providers are available on the Sevenoaks District Council intranet (Simon) under *Chief Executives>Communications>Our documentation*