



MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN

Version 10.0

Part 6.1

Environmental Health Response Plan

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This Part of this Major Emergency Plan is subject to Kent-wide work being undertaken by *Kent Environmental Health Managers*.
When this work is finished, it will replace this Part in its entirety.
Therefore, this is a temporary 'holding' version of this Part and is not complete.

Contents

	Page
1.1 Scientific & Technical Advice Cell (STAC) Plan	3
1.2 Pollution Generally	4
1.3 Hazardous Materials – HAZMAT	4
1.4 Health & Safety	4
1.5 Food Safety	4
1.6 Animal Health	5
1.7 Air Quality	6
1.8 Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) Incidents	9
1.9 Government Decontamination Service (GDS)	10

1.1 - Scientific & Technical Advice Cell (STAC) Plan

See the Kent Resilience Forum's *Scientific & Technical Advice Cell (STAC) Plan* for full information.

Extract from the Executive Summary for the KRF *Scientific & Technical Advice Cell (STAC) Plan*

The establishment of a STAC is likely to be particularly important where there may be significant wider health and environmental consequences, or the need for scientific and technical advice beyond the initial front line response. The STAC should bring together technical experts from those agencies involved in the response and who may provide scientific and technical advice to the Strategic Coordination Group Chair. The purpose of the cell would be to ensure that, as far as possible, scientific or technical debate was contained within the cell so that the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) (and others involved in the response) received the best possible advice based on the available information in a timely, coordinated and understandable way. Given that a number of agencies will be involved in the response, Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT, Kent HPU and Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) should identify the core membership of the STAC, as well as any other membership that may be required on an ad-hoc basis. To ensure the effective working of the cell, membership and attendance should be strictly controlled by the STAC Chair.

The role of the cell in response to an incident would be to:

- provide a common source of scientific and technical advice to the SCGs Commander and other members of the SCG;
- monitor and corral the responding science and technical community to deliver on Gold's high-level objectives and immediate priorities;
- agree any divergence from agreed arrangements for providing science and technical input;
- pool available information and arrive, as far as possible, at a common view on the scientific and technical merits of different courses of action;
- provide a common brief to the technical lead from each agency represented in the cell on the extent of the evidence base available, and how the situation might develop, what this means, and the likely effect of various mitigation strategies;
- identify other agencies / individuals with specialist advice who should be invited to join the cell in order to inform the response;
- liaise with national specialist advisors from agencies represented in the cell and, where warranted, the wider scientific and technical community to ensure the best possible advice is provided;
- liaise between agencies represented in the cell and their national advisors to ensure consistent advice is presented locally and nationally;
- ensure a practical division of effort among the scientific response to avoid duplication and overcome any immediate problems arising;
- maintain a written record of decisions made and the reasons for those decisions This will be required to justify actions taken during an incident and in any subsequent legal action or public enquiry.

1.2 - Pollution Generally

Section to be added

1.3 - Hazardous Materials- HAZMAT

Section to be added

See also *Government Decontamination Service (GDS)* below.

1.4 - Health & Safety

See: http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/business/health_and_safety/default.asp

The aim of the Council's Health & Safety Team is to make sure that people living and working in Sevenoaks District are aware of health and safety hazards at work. Their objective is to help the public reduce the likelihood of accidents and dangerous incidents. The Health & Safety Team provide advice to employers, their employees and the public.

Along with the Health & Safety Executive, the Health & Safety Team is responsible for making sure that regulations set out in current health and safety legislation are understood and followed by employers and their employees. To do this we:

- Carry out health and safety inspections
- Provide advice and guidance
- Log reportable accidents and dangerous occurrences
- Carry out accident and incident investigations
- Launch campaigns to raise public awareness of important issues
- Exercise enforcement options

1.5 - Food Safety

For any emergency, the Environmental Health Team will, if necessary, work with the Food Standards Agency, DEFRA and local businesses to ensure the safety of food supplies.

Information of food safety in emergencies is available on the Food Standards Agency website at <http://www.food.gov.uk/>

This may be based on information received from the Scientific & Technical Advice Cell (STAC).

1.6 - Animal Health

Kent County Council Generic Notifiable Animal Disease Contingency Plan has been compiled by KCC Trading Standards on a model produced by LACORS (the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services), and is available at:

<http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/kent/documents/ah%20contingencyplans/New%20Folder/KCC%20Generic%20Plan%20211108.pdf>

and this plan covers

- avian influenza
- foot & mouth disease
- classical swine fever
- rabies
- bluetongue

Defra : *Contingency Plan for Exotic Diseases of Animals* available at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/control/contingency/exotic.htm>

and disease factsheets available for

- Foot and Mouth Disease
- Avian Influenza
- Newcastle Disease
- Classical Swine Fever
- African Swine Fever
- Swine Vesicular Disease

1.7 - Air Quality

LACORS (the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services), have published information on Air Quality in Major Incidents: Local Authority Role at <http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?id=22930>

Introduction

Local authority environmental protection managers and air quality officers should make themselves familiar with the following information regarding the arrangements for air quality monitoring and modelling in the event of a major incident.

Background

The Major Incident Investigation Board for the Buncefield incident in December 2005 recommended that the provision of air quality modelling and monitoring data in a major air pollution incident should be co-ordinated. The Environment Agency was asked by Defra to take on the co-ordinating role. The new arrangements will include a multi-agency Air Quality Cell, new national air monitoring capability and improved modelling capability phased in between November 2009 and April 2010.

The Air Quality Cell (AQC)

The Environment Agency, in consultation with the Health Protection Agency (Chemical Hazards and Poisons Division), will convene an Air Quality Cell in a major chemical air pollution incident. The Met Office, Health and Safety Laboratory and Food Standards Agency and a Local Authority representative will, where appropriate, join this AQC. The AQC will be chaired by the Environment Agency and will meet virtually, unless the incident is of sufficient magnitude and duration that it needs to meet physically.

The Met Office will provide modelled air quality information to the AQC. The Environment Agency will provide monitored air quality data using:

- Rapid response teams based at eight locations in England and Wales with hand-held monitoring and sampling instruments.
- Two monitoring and sampling response vehicles.
- Download of data from air quality networks.

The Air Quality Cell will co-ordinate air modelling and monitoring; assess the uncertainties and limitations of the data; and provide interpreted air quality information to the Health Protection Agency and the Science and Technical Advice Cell (STAC) at Gold Command (if it is established).

The Health Protection Agency will use the air quality information to provide health advice to the emergency services and the public.

What will the AQC respond to?

The Air Quality Cell will be convened for:

- Major air pollution incidents which affect England or Wales.
- Deliberate or hostile acts, not involving chemical warfare agents (e.g. explosion at a chemical plant).
- Emergency phase of an incident – at the end of this phase we will withdraw and co-ordination of any ongoing environmental modelling and monitoring will be handed over to the Recovery Co-ordination Group (or similar) in recovery phase.

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The local authority role

Local authority capacity and expertise for air quality modelling and monitoring will naturally vary between authorities as air quality is not a priority everywhere. Local authorities may hold helpful background data; carry out their own monitoring; or have knowledge of sensitive receptors. Local authorities are also most likely to take over after the emergency stage (see section below on recovery). There is no duty on local authorities to participate in the AQC; however they have the opportunity to be involved. LACORS would encourage local authorities to cooperate and participate wherever possible. It is vitally important that any air quality data or information is coordinated through the AQC in order to avoid separate messages from different sources being fed into the incident command.

Another potential source of air quality data are the many automatic air networks, such as the Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN), managed by Defra and Local Authorities. A network site may be close to the incident and able to provide early indications of pollution levels. Access to this data during a major incident will be important but its limitations in terms of parameters monitored and analytical method must also be understood. The Environment Agency is in discussion with Defra and local authority representatives, and their contractors, to facilitate rapid access to this information during major incidents.

It is important to note that the legal and regulatory responsibilities of the organisations involved in the response to a major air pollution incident have not changed; the new arrangements are to provide incident command with better information to support their decision-making during the incident

How will it work in practice?

LACORS is working with the LGA to make emergency planners aware of the arrangements for the Air Quality Cell and the role of local authorities in local air quality management and to encourage them to build a process into their emergency plans and regular programme of exercises.

The expectation is that when incident command is established, the emergency planner involved will contact the relevant environmental protection manager or air quality officer from the relevant local authority/ies. LACORS would also encourage you to proactively contact the relevant emergency planners in your area on this issue.

The AQC will usually be convened as a virtual group. If involved, you will be able to participate via telephone conferencing and where possible given remote access to the web-based incident management system in order that you can share information and communicate with the other members of the AQC.

Recovery Phase

Once the emergency phase is over and the incident enters the Recovery phase, the AQC will withdraw the additional monitoring and modelling resources and it will be for local authorities to take this over and to decide whether ongoing monitoring is appropriate and at what level.

In October 2009, the Environment Agency published a fact sheet on *Air Quality in Major Incidents*. This largely replicates the LACORS guidance above, but does include some additional information that may be useful. This fact sheet is available at <http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/upload/23306.doc> The additional text and diagram are reproduced below.

What we will not respond to

The Air Quality Cell will not be convened for:

- Radiological or nuclear incidents – Health Protection Agency co-ordinate these incidents.
- Biological incidents – We will work to consider how to include this, once arrangements are in place for chemical incidents.
- Deliberate or hostile acts involving chemical warfare agents – Defence Science and Technology Laboratories are responsible for providing air quality support for these incidents.

The members of the Air Quality Cell will not use their staff or contractors to monitor air quality:

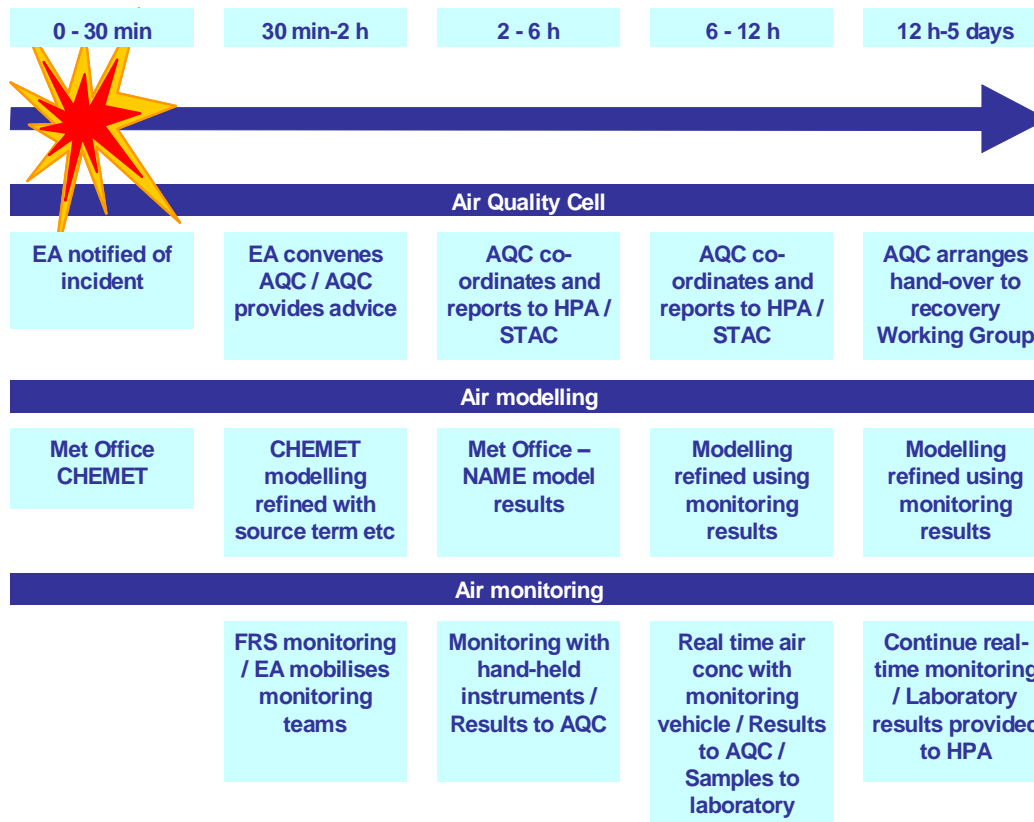
- Inside any cordons established by the emergency services (the Fire and Rescue Services have capability to cover this) – we will monitor in publicly accessible areas
- Inside any enclosed spaces (e.g. buildings, tunnels etc) - the Fire and Rescue Services have capability to cover this.

The timeline

The timescales to which we will respond are indicated below. We would expect the Emergency Services to notify the Environment Agency within 30 minutes of a major incident.

The Environment Agency will convene the Air Quality Cell and mobilise monitoring teams.

CHEMET modelling information will be available within 20 minutes (as now) with more detailed modelling provided later.



For information on CHEMET (CHEMical METeorology), see <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/publicsector/CHEMET/>

1.8 - Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) Incidents

The Kent Resilience Forum maintains the *Kent Joint Services Response Protocol to CBRN Incidents*.

Local authorities have a role in such incidents and this is outlined in that plan.

4.10 THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Local Authority personnel are not trained or equipped to operate in any CBRN contaminated areas. Local Authorities will, however, exercise its duty to support the response to such incidents using generic procedures. Co-responders must take account of these limitations particularly in respect of managing the scene and dealing with casualties, survivors and evacuees. Local authorities will:

- Send Liaison Officer(s) to joint agency tactical control to facilitate the joint response on the ground.
- Send senior representatives will attend the Strategic Co-ordination Group as required.
- Ensure, in liaison with other relevant agencies, that appropriate and timely public information and advice is provided.
- Coordinate the recovery phase of the incident.
- Make Environmental Health Officers available as the primary source of Local Authority's environmental advice during the response and recovery phases.
- Take an active part in any Scientific Technical Advice Cell (STAC) as directed by the Director of Public Health.
- Activate Rest Centres for non-contaminated persons requiring welfare provision
- In certain circumstances, and in close collaboration with Health Services, assist in accommodating those suffering minor injuries should it not be possible to process them through normal channels.
- Work as appropriate with the Health Protection Agency, Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, local Primary Care Trust and the National Poisons Unit, to gather information and assess the risk to public health during the emergency.
- Liaise with local Water Supply Companies to ensure that any risks to drinking water supplies have been assessed.
- Work with the media team to deliver messages of reassurance and/or action in the interests of public health.
- Invoke mutual aid protocols with neighbouring authorities as required.
- Work with the Food Standards Agency, DEFRA and local businesses to ensure the safety of food supplies.
- Carry out any investigations deemed necessary into infectious disease as directed by the Health Protection Agency and the Director of Public Health.
- Participate, if appropriate, in the multi agency group assessing the necessary remediation of land, air or water following an incident.
- Work with relevant experts to advise landowners and other responsible authorities on the necessary actions to be taken to remediate land, air or water reduce and alleviate risks to public health.
- Carry out such investigations as may be necessary into infectious disease as directed by the Health Protection Agency and the Director of Public Health.

For radiological emergencies, the Health Protection Agency publishes the *UK Recovery Handbooks for Radiation Incidents: 2009*

Available at www.hpa.org.uk/HPA/Publications/Radiation/

1.9 - Government Decontamination Service (GDS)

Information from <http://www.defra.gov.uk/gds/about/index.htm>

About the GDS

GDS is part of the Emergency Response and Recovery Programme at FERA (The Food and Environment Research Agency).

What the GDS does...

The GDS helps the country prepare for and recover from a CBRN or significant HAZMAT incident, and minimise its impact on society, the economy and the environment. We provide advice, guidance, management support and contractual arrangements to support those authorities responsible for dealing with the decontamination of the built and open environment, and transport assets.

GDS has both a role in preparing for and then in dealing with a crisis.

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GDS has both a role in preparing for and then in dealing with a crisis.

Role in preparing for a crisis – core functions:

- To establish and maintain a Framework of contractors (Specialist Suppliers) which, in the event of a CBRN or major HAZMAT incident, and using a call-off contract mechanism, can offer appropriate remediation or decontamination-related services (including sampling and monitoring and waste management services to facilitate decontamination) for the built and open environment and transport assets, including critical national infrastructure;
- To establish and maintain a programme of work to test, exercise and evaluate GDS and GDS Framework capability against likely requirements based on the appropriate Government policies and materials, using other technical information as appropriate;
- To capture information on known Framework capability and capacity; identify gaps in known capability and capacity, and explore mitigations and possible solutions as appropriate;
- Provision of advice and briefing on Framework capability and capacity, and written guidance on associated remediation/decontamination issues to departments, Devolved Administrations, and Responsible Authorities;
- To participate in the work of identifying, prioritising, and, as necessary, managing decontamination-related research projects;
- To build up a library of the relevant knowledge (including reference material) and experience available to GDS, drawing on national and international information, which can be used by its officers, and others, to support the development of the Framework and wider remediation work;
- To maintaining a Duty Officer role to give access to the GDS services at all times.

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Role in a crisis:

- To be expert advisors on the capability and capacity of the GDS Framework contractors, their services and, where relevant, the different remediation or decontamination methodologies and technologies available through the Framework;
- To provide expert/scientific advice as necessary to relevant groups, including the STAC and Recovery Co-ordination Group, on the consequences of the decontamination techniques used by the Framework contractors, and on their capability/capacity and operating procedures to inform the consequence management strategy;
- To help the lead Responsible Authority (or “Agent”) access the most appropriate Framework services in order to ensure the efficient, effective and timely decontamination/remediation work is carried out and to assist them in being an intelligent customer when setting up the appropriate contract or contracts;
- To facilitate the liaison between the Responsible Authority and the contractor(s) throughout the duration of the contract;
- To signpost alternative options where Framework services have reached capacity, or where the decontamination service necessary does not require the level of capability available through the Framework;
- To provide where required, appropriate briefing and assistance to Central Government (including direct to the relevant Minister through the Lead Government Department) on decontamination-related matters including capability and capacity of Framework contractors and other known remediation or decontamination capability.
- During a CBRN or major HazMat incident GDS will deploy on the invitation of the Responsible Authority, or at the direction of CoBR. The extent of the deployment will be incident specific, and reflect both the requirements of the Responsible Authority and the efficient use of GDS resources.

Our work is built on a foundation of scientific support and research to improve decontamination technologies and capabilities.

These functions will allow GDS to bring together the available expertise in a logical and comprehensive manner, allowing those responsible for decontamination to function far more effectively. We will remove the need for them having to procure the work independently, and allow them to benefit from pre-planning.

From :

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/gds/guidance/documents/Remedi-deconta-issues.pdf>

Remediation and Decontamination Related Issues

Why contact the GDS?

- The GDS can offer free advice and guidance to support those responsible for decontamination and/or remediation following a CBRN Incident.
- GDS services are available on request (can be requested by Central Government, Emergency Services or Responsible Authorities who may be specified by statute or, in the case of a private body or company, may be the owner/agent of a building, location or asset).
- GDS can offer advice on:
 - Remediation options (including whether or not to decontaminate and what alternative options are available);
 - Capability, capacity and availability of specialist CBRN decontamination contractors in terms of decontamination of the built and open environment, infrastructure and transport. They may, if invited to do so, be able to offer other resources to assist in the site clearance process e.g. monitoring and sampling;
 - Support (and facilitate where necessary) the contractual relationship between the Responsible Authority (or Agent) and specialist CBRN decontamination contractor(s) through a Framework where agreed terms, conditions and pricing schedules are already in place.

To assist and support, the GDS will need to establish:

- The specifics and extent of contamination (What, where, how much, fixed or mobile?)
- To obtain site plans (both street and buildings –with services where possible) and rendezvous/strategic holding areas for Framework Suppliers to bring kit/staff forward to
- Who is responsible for managing the remediation process will they accept responsibility for the cost of a specialist CBRN decontamination contractor – if not, who will?

Other related issues:

- Has the contamination been contained to prevent further spread?
- Have forensic investigations been completed by the police and specialist teams (GDS specialist suppliers can assist in this process if requested) and the site handed over for remediation?
- Has a Recovery Co-ordination Group (RCG) been set up and has a decision to decontaminate been taken? – prioritisation of work and resources may be required. (GDS Science Team may assist with technical remediation options and can feed information into the remediation / decontamination strategy / Science and Technical Advice Cell (STAC) / Strategic Co-ordination Group)
- What site security is in place if the police cordon is removed?
- Has waste management and legislation (regulatory impacts/exemption orders) been considered? i.e. ownership, packaging, transport, disposal or storage. A strategy will be required and finance options considered;
- Consider who is responsible for costs: Local / Central Government, Insurance (consider contacting Association of British Insurers).

The Decontamination Process:

- Specific sampling and monitoring is carried out to inform the decontamination strategy;
- Consider inviting specialist suppliers to RCG / STAC for detailed advice on decontamination strategy;
- RCG and STAC agree decontamination and waste strategy (includes agreed end point, planning to prioritise workloads, cost estimation, decisions on decontamination technology, disposal routes and monitoring processes).
- Once engaged, the specialist GDS contractor(s) will, in accordance with decontamination strategy, provide a plan which will include method statements and risk assessments;
- Decontamination carried out (various methods may apply);
- Post decontamination (clearance) sampling carried out;
- Final clearance given by RCG / Clearance Committee;
- Completion report provided.