
C A R L O W
C O U N T Y C O U N C I L

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHEATHARLOCHA



Carlow County Council

MAJOR
EMERGENCY PLAN

2020

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Approved By:	Kathleen Holohan - Chief Executive

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Foreword

Major Emergency Management is a challenging and priority issue for Carlow County Council. This Major Emergency Plan, which has been prepared and reviewed in accordance with the Framework for Major Emergency Management (2006), sets out how we as a Local Authority are prepared to protect our citizens, environment and infrastructure in the event of a Major Emergency.

The purpose of this Major Emergency Plan is to put in place arrangements that will enable Carlow County Council to effectively manage a major emergency in co-ordination with the other Principal Response Agencies, An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive. While no contingency plan can cater for every possible scenario, the procedures set out in this Major Emergency Plan will ensure that staff at all levels are aware of their responsibilities and that appropriate actions are initiated in a timely and effective manner to deal with a major emergency throughout all its phases.

It is also important to note the role of the wider community in response to an emergency incident. Carlow County Council works closely with community groups and organisations for the betterment of all and a particular emphasis is given to the protection of the most vulnerable in society.

By its nature, emergency planning is an on-going process, and all who have a part to play are continually seeking to learn lessons from the past and develop improved arrangements for the future. This plan, therefore, will be kept under constant review.

Signed



Kathleen Holohan,
Chief Executive,
Carlow County Council

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Contents

Record of Amendments	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Activating the Plan	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Foreword	iii
Contents	v
Section 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction to the plan	2
1.2 Major Emergency plan – ‘A framework for Emergency Management’ (2006)	2
1.3 Objectives – Major Emergency plan	3
1.4 Scope.....	3
1.5 The relationship / inter-operability of the Major Emergency Plan with other emergency plans	4
1.6 Terminology of the Plan	4
1.7 Distribution of the Plan	4
1.8 Status of plan – review date.....	4
1.9 Public access to the plan	5
Section 2 Carlow County Council and its Functional Area	6
2.1 Role of Carlow County Council	7
2.2 Characteristics of Area.....	7
2.3 Partner principal response agencies.....	7
2.4 Regional Preparedness	8
Section 3 Risk Assessment for the Area	9
3.1 History of area in terms of emergency events.....	10
3.2 The general and specific risks that may be faced locally and regionally	10
3.3 Scenarios.....	11
3.4 Risk management / mitigation / risk reduction strategies	11
3.5 Associated Plans and their compatibility with the Major Emergency Plan	12
Section 4 Resources for Emergency Response	13
4.1 Structure/Resources/Services of Carlow County Council	14
4.2 Special staff arrangements for call in of off duty staff.....	15
4.3 How the resources of the Council are matched to the functions assigned to it	15
4.4 Other organisations / agencies that may be mobilised to assist.....	15
4.4.1 Civil Defence.....	16
4.4.2 The Defence Forces	16
4.4.3 The Irish Red Cross	16
4.4.4 Voluntary Emergency Services Sector.....	16
4.4.5 The Community Affected	17
4.4.6 Utilities	17
4.4.7 Private Sector	17
4.5 Mutual Aid	18
4.6 Regional Level Emergencies	18
4.7 National / International Assistance	18

Section 5	Preparedness for Major Emergency Response	19
5.1	Incorporation of Major Emergency Management into the Council’s business planning process	20
5.2	Leadership in Major Emergency Management	20
5.3	Documentation of a major emergency development program	20
5.4	Key Roles in Major Emergency Response	21
5.5	Support Teams	21
5.6	Staff development programme	21
5.7	Training programmes	21
5.8	Internal Exercise programme	22
5.9	Inter agency training and exercise programme	22
5.10	Resource for Preparedness	22
5.11	Procurement Procedures	22
5.12	Major Emergency Preparedness Appraisal	22
5.13	Public Information	23
Section 6	The Generic Command, Control and Co-ordination Systems	24
6.1	Command arrangements	25
6.1.1	Within individual services belonging to the Council	25
6.2	Control arrangements	25
6.2.1	Control of all services / sections of the Council which respond	25
6.2.2	Control of external organisations	29
6.2.3	Support arrangements for the Control function	29
6.3	Co-ordination arrangements	29
6.3.1	Determination of Lead Agency	29
6.3.2	On-site Co-ordination	30
6.3.3	Local Co-ordination	30
6.3.4	Co-ordination – specific circumstances	31
6.3.4.1	Mutual Aid	31
6.3.4.2	Incidents occurring on the Council boundaries	31
6.3.4.3	How Multi-site or wide area emergencies are to be dealt with	31
6.3.4.4	How Links with National Emergency Plans will operate	32
6.3.4.5	Links with National Government work	32
Section 7	The Common Elements of Response	34
7.1	Declaring a Major Emergency	35
7.1.1	Arrangements for declaring a major emergency	35
7.1.2	Standard Format of the Information Message	36
7.2	Initial Mobilisation	36
7.3	Command, control and communication centre(s) to be used	36
7.4	Co-ordination Centres and Information Management	37
7.4.1	On-Site Co-ordination	37
7.4.2	Crisis Management Team	37
7.4.3	Location of pre-determined Local Co-ordination Centres	38
7.4.4	Regional Co-ordination Centre	38
7.4.5	Information Management	39
7.5	Communications Facilities	39
7.5.1	Inter-agency communication on site, including protocols and procedures	40
7.5.2	Communications between site and co-ordination centres	40
7.6	Exercising the Lead Agency’s Co-ordination Roles	41
7.6.1	Lead Agency	422

7.6.2	Review and transfer of the Lead Agency	42
7.6.3	Lead Agency Co-ordination Function	42
7.7	Public Information	43
7.7.1	Council's role in situations where warning arrangements are needed	43
7.7.2	Mediums of communication	44
7.8	The Media	44
7.8.1	Arrangements for liaison with the media	44
7.8.2	Specify arrangements for media on-site	44
7.8.3	Arrangements for media at Local and / or Regional Co-ordination Centres	45
7.8.4	Arrangements for media at, or adjacent to, other locations associated with the major emergency	45
7.9	Site Management Arrangements	45
7.9.1	Generic site management elements/arrangements	46
7.9.2	Control of access / identification of personnel and services of the Council	47
7.9.3	Air exclusion zones	48
7.10	Mobilising Additional Resources	48
7.10.1	Mobilising Organisations	48
7.10.1.1	Mobilisation of Civil Defence	49
7.10.1.2	Mobilisation of Defence Forces	49
7.10.1.3	Mobilisation of Red Cross	49
7.10.1.4	Mobilisation Voluntary Emergency Services Sector	50
7.10.1.5	Mobilisation of Utilities	50
7.10.1.6	Mobilisation of Private Sector	50
7.10.2	Arrangements for identifying and mobilising additional Organisations	50
7.10.3	Arrangements for liaison with utilities	51
7.10.4	Arrangements for integration of casual volunteers as appropriate	51
7.10.5	Arrangements for command, control, coordination and demobilisation of organisations mobilised to the site	51
7.10.6	Mutual aid arrangement	51
7.10.7	Requests for out-of-region assistance	51
7.10.8	Requests for international assistance	52
7.11	Casualty and Survivor Arrangements	52
7.11.1	Casualties and Survivors and the Local Authority's role in this	52
7.11.2	Injured	52
7.11.2.1	Triage	53
7.11.2.2	Transporting lightly injured and uninjured persons from the site	53
7.11.2.3	Casualty Clearing	53
7.11.3	Fatalities	53
7.11.3.1	Role of the Coroner	54
7.11.3.2	Arrangements for dealing with fatalities, both on and off-site, including Body Holding Areas and Temporary Mortuaries	54
7.11.3.3	Identification of the deceased	54
7.11.4	Survivors	54
7.11.4.1	Arrangements for dealing with uninjured survivors who require Support	55
7.11.5	Casualty information	55
7.11.5.1	The Casualty Bureau	55
7.11.5.2	Casualty information	55
7.11.6	Friends and Relatives Reception Centres	56
7.11.7	Non-National Casualties	56
7.11.7.1	Foreign language communication resources	56
7.11.8	Pastoral and Psycho-social Care	56

7.11.8.1	Responsibility of Pastoral and psycho-social support Arrangements.....	57
7.12	Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials	57
7.12.1	Major Hazardous Material Incidents.....	57
7.12.2	CCBRN incidents	57
7.12.3	Plan for Biological Incidents	57
7.12.4	Plan for National public health (infectious diseases) plan	58
7.12.5	Plan for Nuclear Accidents.....	58
7.12.6	Decontamination	58
7.13	Protecting Threatened Populations.....	59
7.13.1	Provisions of Advice to Threatened Populations.....	59
7.13.2	Evacuation arrangements	60
7.13.3	Arrangements for the involvement of The Public Health service	60
7.14	Early and Public Warning Systems	61
7.14.1	Monitoring potentially hazardous situations	61
7.14.2	How warnings are to be disseminated	61
7.15	Emergencies arising on Inland Waterways	61
7.15.1	Liaison with the Irish Coast Guard	62
7.15.2	Receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to inland waterway emergencies	62
7.16	Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations	62
7.16.1	Response Personnel - Safety, Health and Welfare.....	62
7.16.2	Safety of the Council's rescue personnel.....	62
7.16.3	Danger area procedures	62
7.16.4	Danger area evacuation.....	63
7.16.5	Physical Welfare	63
7.16.6	Psycho-social support for personnel	63
7.17	Logistical Issues/ Protracted Incidents	63
7.17.1	Arrangements for rotation of front line rescue / field staff.....	64
7.17.2	Re-organising normal emergency and other services cover	64
7.17.3	Arrangements for initial and ongoing welfare for field staff	64
7.18	Investigations	64
7.18.1	Investigations arising from the emergency	64
7.18.2	Minimise disruption of evidence	65
7.18.3	Other parties with statutory investigation roles.....	65
7.19	Community / VIPs / Observers.....	65
7.19.1	How links are to be established with communities affected by an Emergency..	66
7.19.2	Arrangements for receiving VIPs who wish to visit.....	66
7.19.3	Arrangements for national / international observers.....	66
7.20	Standing-Down the Major Emergency	66
7.20.1	How the status of the emergency will be stood-down	66
7.20.2	Operational Debrief.....	67
Section 8	Agency Specific Elements and Sub-Plans	69
8.1	Agency Specific Plans	69
8.2	Sub-Plans in use in Carlow County Council.....	69
Section 9	Plan for Regional level Coordination.....	70
9.1	Plan for Regional Level Coordination.....	70
Section 10	Links with National Plans	71
10.1	National Emergency Plans.....	71

10.1.1	National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents.....	71
10.1.2	National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan	71
10.1.3	Animal Health Plan	71
10.2	Activation on request from Irish Coast Guard	71
10.3	Activation on request from a Minister of Government	72
Section 11	Severe Weather Plans	73
11.1	Sub-Plans for responding to severe weather emergencies.....	73
11.1.1	Flooding Emergencies	73
11.1.2	Severe Weather Conditions (Excluding Flooding Emergencies).....	73
Section 12	Site and Event Specific Arrangements and Plans	74
12.1	Site and Event Specific Arrangements and Plans	74
12.1	SEVESO sites.....	75
Section 13	The Recovery Phase	76
13.1	Support for Individuals and Communities.....	77
13.1.1	Supporting individuals and communities affected by the emergency	77
13.1.2	Managing of public appeals and external aid	78
13.2	Clean-Up.....	78
13.2.1	Arrangements for clean-up of sites / removal of debris/decontamination of sites of emergency and the Council's role in this	79
13.3	Restoration of Infrastructure and Services. Specify how restoration of infrastructure and services is to be achieved, and the Council's role in this	79
13.3.1	Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the situation	79
13.3.2	Procedure for liaison with utilities	80
13.3.3	How the order of priorities are to be determined	80
13.3.4	Protection measures against continuing hazards.....	80
Section 14	Review of the Major Emergency Plan	81
14.1	Internal Review Process	82
14.2	How the MEP is to be reviewed and amended externally	82
14.2.1	Inter-agency Review Process at the Regional Steering Major Emergency Group	82
14.2.2	Review of the MEP by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	83
14.3	After every activation, the Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed and reported upon	83
14.3.1	How the agency's performance of its functions will be reviewed and reported upon internally.....	83
14.3.2	How the co-ordination function will be reviewed and reported upon externally and jointly with other principal response agencies	84
Section 15	Appendices	Error! Bookmark not defined.

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Section 1 Introduction

1.0 Sub-Sections Introducing the Major Emergency Plan
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- 1.1 Introduction to the plan**
- 1.2 Major Emergency plan – ‘A Framework for Emergency Management’ (2006)**
- 1.3 Objectives – Major Emergency Plan**
- 1.4 Scope**
- 1.5 The relationship / inter-operability of the Major Emergency Plan with other emergency plans**
- 1.6 Terminology of the Plan**
- 1.7 Distribution of the Plan**
- 1.8 Status of plan – review date**
- 1.9 Public access to the plan**

1.1 Introduction to the plan

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of “A Framework for Major Emergency Management” (2006) and sets out the arrangements, which will be activated by an authorised officer to facilitate the Carlow County Council response to a major emergency, which is defined as follows:

“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 management and coordination methods outlined in this plan, in particular the Local and/or Regional Co-ordination Centres for Major Emergency Management, may be activated to manage the response to other incidents, whether a major emergency is declared or not.

1.2 Major Emergency plan – ‘A framework for Emergency Management’ (2006)

In 2006 the government approved a two-year Major Emergency Development Programme 2006-2008 (MEDP) to allow for the structured migration from current arrangements of that time to an enhanced level of preparedness via the new emergency management process. The purpose of this plan is to set out the arrangements for an effective, efficient and coordinated response to enable the three principal emergency 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; and
- Recovery.



Fig 1.1: Five Stage Emergency Management Paradigm

1.3 Objectives – Major Emergency plan

The objectives of this plan are

- To protect life, the environment, property and to provide support to those affected by a major emergency
- To ensure, insofar as is possible, that Carlow County Council's response to a major emergency is effective, efficient, and is coordinated with the other response agencies
- To act as a single reference source for major emergency planning and response for Carlow County Council
- To ensure that the roles and responsibilities of Carlow County Council in preparing for and responding to a major emergency are clearly understood and that the organisation provides clear leadership in a time of crisis
- To outline the process and structure for the efficient, coordinated and effective delivery of services to the community during a major emergency, including an early and appropriate response
- To outline a realistic and rational approach, which is capable of being delivered on and includes transparent systems with clear accountability for actions
- To harness community spirit and the ethos of self-protection
- To maintain essential services during an emergency
- To emphasise the need for safe working by Council staff, other agencies staff and volunteers

The fact that procedures have been specified in the Plan should not restrict the use of initiative or common-sense by individual officers in the light of prevailing circumstances in a particular emergency.

1.4 Scope

The plan is designed primarily to provide for the protection, support and welfare of the public in times of emergency. The plan is based on an 'All-Hazards' approach, where the common features of coordinated response and the management of common consequences are recognised, regardless of the type of emergency.

The plan is structured to allow for scaling up the response to a major emergency to Regional level coordination, involving several administrative areas of the

responding agencies, and if necessary, for escalating to a National level response.

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

An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and Carlow County Council are the Principal Response Agencies (PRA) charged with managing the response to emergency situations which arise within the statutory boundaries of Carlow County Council.

This plan is supported by, and is compatible with, the Major Emergency Plans of An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive. In certain circumstances, the local response may be escalated to regional level, thus activating the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. If this is activated, the management of the incident will be coordinated from a regional perspective.

1.6 Terminology of the Plan

In situations where different organisations are working together, there is a need for common vocabulary to enable them to communicate effectively. This is particularly the case where the principal emergency services and a range of other bodies are working together under the pressures that a major emergency brings. Therefore, a full set of relevant terms and acronyms are provided in *Appendix E2*, which should be used by **all** agencies.

1.7 Distribution of the Plan

A number of hard copies of this plan will be distributed to the Individuals and Organisations listed in *Appendix E1*. The primary method of distribution will be in electronic format.

1.8 Status of plan – review date

All other revisions of this plan have now been superseded. The current issue will be active from **12.00 noon on the 1st July 2020**. The plan contents are valid from that date. The plan has been approved by the Major Emergency Management Committee, and has been reviewed and will be reviewed as follows.

- MEP Version 1.0: September 2008
- MEP Version 1.1: June 2010
- MEP Version 1.2: November 2011
- MEP Version 1.3: May 2015
- MEP Version 1.4: November 2019
- MEP Version 2.0: June 2020
- Plan Review Date: As necessary

1.9 Public access to the plan

An edited copy of the Major Emergency Plan, with contact telephone numbers and other personal information removed, will be available on the Council website at www.carlow.ie

Section 2 Carlow County Council and its Functional Area

2.0 Sub-Sections Introducing Carlow County Council and its Functional Area

- 2.1 Role of Carlow County Council**
- 2.2 Characteristics of Area**
- 2.3 Partner principal response agencies**
- 2.4 Regional Preparedness**

2.1 Role of Carlow County Council

The functional area of this plan in the case of Carlow County Council is the administrative County of Carlow divided into the Municipal Districts of Carlow, Muinebheag and Tullow.

In the event of a major emergency the role of Carlow County Council is to ensure life safety by providing a top-class emergency service in the form of the Fire and Rescue Service and Civil Defence. Carlow County Council will ensure that danger areas are made safe in order to permit other agencies to undertake their recovery and rehabilitation operations. In the immediate aftermath of an incident principal concerns include: support for the other emergency services; support and care for the local and wider community; use of its resources to mitigate the effects of the emergency and co-ordination of the voluntary organisations. In the 'recovery' phase the local Authority will be responsible to lead and co-ordinate the rehabilitation of the community and the restoration of the environment.

2.2 Characteristics of Area

County Carlow is part of the south east of Ireland. Carlow is land locked having a total area of 934 square kilometers. It is neighbour to the following counties Wicklow, Laois, Kildare, Kilkenny and Wexford. The county town is Carlow town with the population of the town and environs being approx. 24,300. The overall population of County Carlow is approx. 57,000. A breakdown of the population centers is given below;

Major Centres	Population	Demography
Carlow	24,300	Elderly (>65yrs) 13%
Tullow	4,600	Children (< 4yrs) 7%
Bagenalstown	2,800	Ethnic Minority 12%
Rathvilly	950	
Leighlinbridge	900	
Ballon	700	
Borris	650	
Hacketstown	600	

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2016 Census

(See Appendix D1 - Carlow Risk Assessment for a more detailed assessment of the characteristics of the area)

2.3 Partner principal response agencies

Other agencies responsible for Emergency Services in this area are: -

- (a) Health Service Executive: South region comprising of counties Kerry, Cork, Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Tipperary.
- (b) An Garda Síochána: Carlow/Kilkenny Division

2.4 Regional Preparedness

Under certain specific circumstances regional level major emergencies may be declared, with a Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination activated. This will provide for mutual aid, support and co-ordination facilities to be activated in a region, the boundaries of which are determined to suit the exigencies of the particular emergency. There are eight regions in total that have been created for Major Emergency purposes. The regions are shown in Figure 2.1 below;

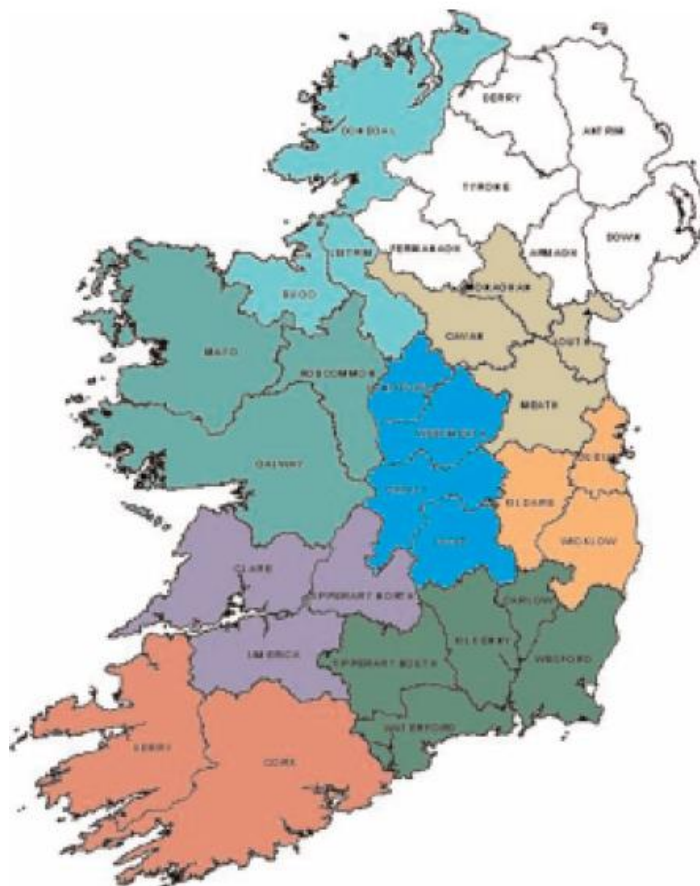


Figure 2.1: Map of the Major Emergency Management regions

This South East Region incorporates the following counties;

- Carlow
- Kilkenny
- Wexford
- Waterford

An inter-agency Regional Steering Group and Regional Working Group has been formed for the South East Major Emergency Management Region. Membership of these groups include senior management from each of the principal response agencies (PRAs).

Section 3 Risk Assessment for the Area

3.0 Sub-Sections on Risk Assessment for the Area

- 3.1 History of area in terms of emergency events**
- 3.2 The general and specific risks that may be faced locally and regionally**
- 3.3 Scenarios**
- 3.4 Risk management / mitigation / risk reduction strategies**
- 3.5 Associated Plans and their compatibility with the Major Emergency Plan**

3.1 History of area in terms of emergency events

To prepare effectively to deal with potential emergencies it is necessary to have regard to specific risks faced by a community. Risk Assessment is a process by which the hazards facing a particular community are identified and assessed in terms of the risk which they pose. *(See Appendix D1, for detailed Risk Assessment)*

Major emergencies by their very nature are few and far between. A Major Emergency has thankfully to date never been declared in Carlow; however the county has experienced large scale emergency events over the years. Most recently

1. Severe Weather Event: County Wide January 2010 and December 2010/January 2011.
2. Flood Event: Carlow Town, Tullow, Leighlinbridge, Tinnahinch January 2010 and January 2011.
3. Hurricane Ophelia - October 2017
4. Storm Emma - February 2018
5. Covid 19 Corona Virus Outbreak 2020

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

A number of risk headings were identified, and risk assessments have been carried out on these premises / area. The risk assessment groups can be broken into the following areas;

1) Hazardous Sites:

There are currently no SEVESO sites in Carlow County Council's functional area.

2) Critical Infrastructure Emergencies:

1. National Primary/Secondary routes M9, N80 & N81
2. Iarnród Éireann: Dublin/Waterford Rail Route

3) Flooding / Pollution / Animal disease emergencies:

1. River Barrow / Burin / Slaney

4) Utility company emergencies:

1. Gas Networks Ireland
2. E.S.B Networks
3. Eir
4. Irish Water

5) Aviation & CBRN emergencies:

Following terrorist incidents in recent years, a number of Government Departments are currently involved in planning on a national level for emergencies that involve aviation and CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Nuclear & Radiological agents).

Aviation emergencies have also been identified in the risk assessment process.

3.3 Scenarios

The following have been selected as exemplars on which preparedness for Carlow has been based (*See Appendix D1, for detailed Risk Assessment*)

- Severe Weather/Urban Flooding
- Aircraft Collision / Loss
- Water Contamination
- Fire / Major Crowd Safety and Civil Disorder
- Major RTA / Hazmat
- Rail Accident
- Industrial Fire / Explosion
- Critical Infrastructure
- Methane Explosion
- Gas Explosion on main Cork to Dublin gas line.
- Bridge Collapse
- Structural Collapse

3.4 Risk management / mitigation / risk reduction strategies

By carrying out a risk assessment we can identify the risks posed to the county and mitigate for their effects. It also enables us to plan and prepare for those risks which cannot be eliminated.

The risk assessment process was carried out initially by an inter-agency team, with invited members of An Garda Síochána, HSE and Carlow County Council, before being undertaken and documented by the Major Emergency Development Committee MEDC.

The risk assessment comprises four stages:

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

By carrying out a risk assessment we can identify the risks posed to the county and mitigate for their effects. It also enables us to plan and prepare for those risks which cannot be eliminated.

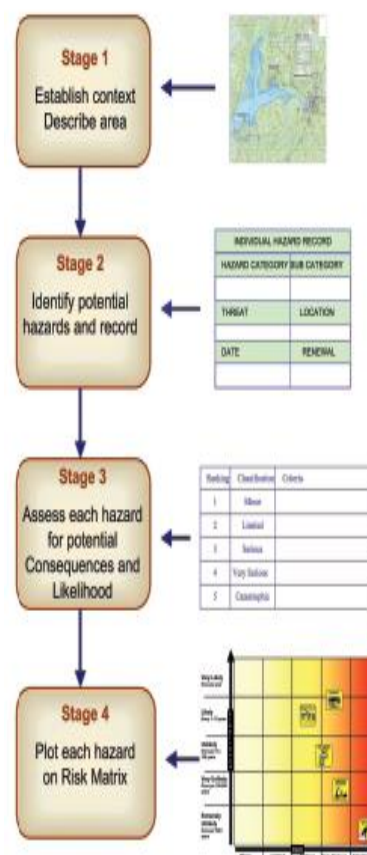


Fig3.1: Schematic Risk Assessment Process

3.5 Associated Plans and their compatibility with the Major Emergency Plan

Associated with this plan are Local Authority Sub Plans (*Appendix D4*)

This major emergency plan will take supremacy over any conflict with existing plans. Existing plans should be updated to ensure compatibility with this plan.

Section 4 Resources for Emergency Response

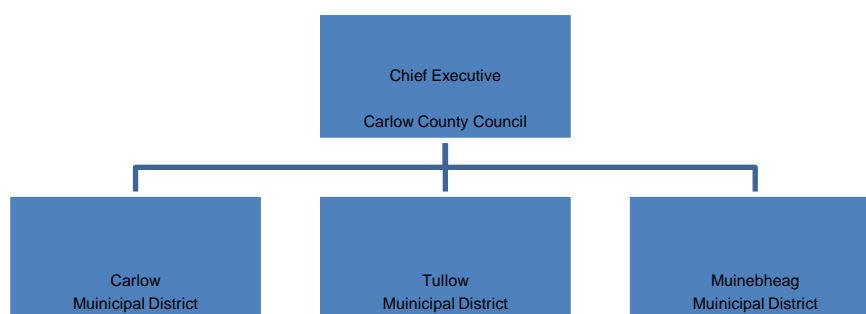
4.0 Sub-Sections on Resources for Emergency Response

- 4.1 Structure/Resources/Services of Carlow County Council**
- 4.2 Special staff arrangements for call in of off duty staff**
- 4.3 How the resources of the Council are matched to the functions assigned to it**
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 - 4.4.6 Utilities**
 - 4.4.7 Private Sector**
- 4.5 Mutual Aid**
- 4.6 Regional Level Emergencies**
- 4.7 National / International Assistance**

4.1 Structure/Resources/Services of Carlow County Council

The organisational structure of Carlow County Council can be divided into two parts; firstly, the Elected Members, and secondly, The Chief Executive and her/his staff (details of both can be found in Carlow County Council Annual Report).

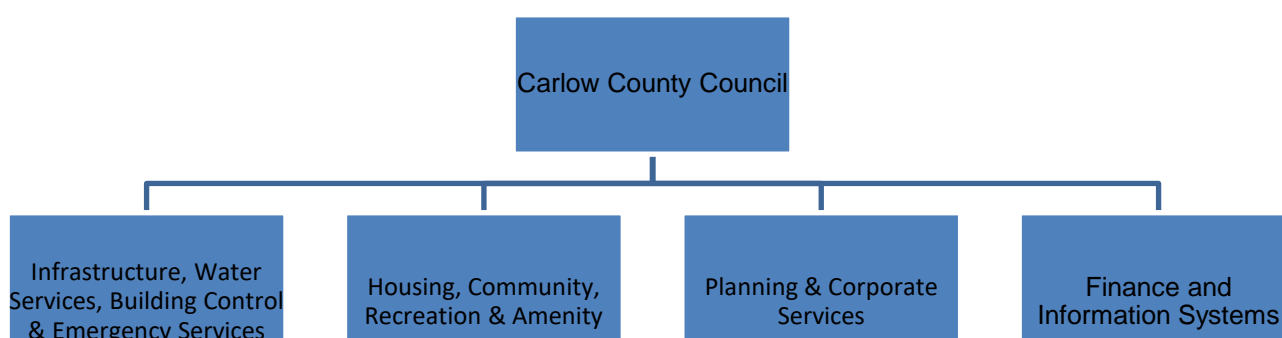
Carlow County Council incorporates the Municipal Districts of Carlow, Muinebheag and Tullow. It is governed by the Local Government Acts, the most recent of which is the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).



There are a number of Directors of Service at Carlow County Council who report directly to the Chief Executive and who are responsible for the functioning of their section within the council. These sections are;

- Infrastructure, Water Services, Building Control & Emergency Services
- Housing, Community, Recreation & Amenity
- Planning & Corporate Services
- Finance & I.T.

The Chief Executive is responsible for supervising local government operations and implementing the policies adopted by the council. Each section of Council may be called upon to act in the event of a Major Emergency (*see Appendix B2 for Contact Details*).



4.2 Special staff arrangements for call in of off duty staff

The level of mobilisation required across all sections of Carlow County Council will be dependent on the incident, scale duration, type and time of occurrence. Council staff other than those who normally respond to routine emergencies (water services, road, housing etc) will be mobilised in accordance with pre-determined procedures. In addition the Civil Defence, under the authority of Carlow County Council operate on a call out system, however it is worth considering that their response is completely subject to the availability of volunteers, see section 4.4.1.

On activation of this plan, the Council Crisis Management Team will assess the requirements for additional resources and arrangements and will formally request additional support internally and from external agencies and/or the activation of mutual aid agreements.

4.3 How the resources of the Council are matched to the functions assigned to it

Carlow County Council will identify, match and formally nominate competent individuals and alternates to the key roles to enable the agency to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in its Major Emergency Plan.

Support teams will be put in place for key roles and operational protocols setting out the arrangements which will enable the agency's support teams to be mobilised and function in accordance with the arrangements set out in the Major Emergency Plan.

Assignment of key roles and how those roles are to be delivered are documented (*please see Section 5.4 of this document*).

4.4 Other organisations / agencies that may be mobilised to assist

There are a number of organisations and agencies which may be called upon to assist the principal response agencies in responding to major emergencies in addition to specialist national and local organisations. These organisations may be grouped as follows;

- Defence Forces
- Civil Defence
- Irish Coast Guard
- The Irish Red Cross
- Voluntary Emergency Services: (SEMRA (South Eastern Mountain Rescue), SRDA (Search and Rescue Dog Association), I.C.R.O. (Irish Cave Rescue Organization), Order of Malta).
- Community Volunteers
- Utility companies (ESB, Bord Gáis, Irish Water, Bus Éireann etc.)
- Private contractors

(See Appendices B3, B4 & B5 for contact details)

4.4.1 Civil Defence

Civil Defence is a body of volunteers trained in the disciplines of First Aid, Welfare, Water Rescue, Search and Recovery as well as drone operations. A call out system is in place in the event of an emergency however it is worth considering that a response is completely subject to the availability of Volunteers.

Civil Defence will be available to help with any area assigned to them to assist the Local Authority or other Statutory Service, subject to the availability of volunteers. *(See Appendix B4 – Voluntary Emergency Services)*

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 or materials to respond to a major emergency. Provision of Defence Forces' capabilities is, therefore, dependent on the exigencies of the service and within available resources at the time.

It is recognised that assistance requested from the Defence Forces should 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.

Details on requesting assistance from the Defence Forces is contained in *Appendix B3*

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 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 B4 - Voluntary Emergency Services)*

4.4.4 Voluntary Emergency Services Sector

Details of other Voluntary Emergency Services in the Carlow area are included in *Appendix B4 - Voluntary Emergency Services*

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.

Where the On-Site Co-ordinator determines that casual volunteers should be integrated into the response, it is recommended that the service tasking them, or confirming them in tasks on which they are engaged, should request volunteers to form teams of three to five persons, depending on the tasks, with one of their number as team leader. Where available, orange armbands emblazoned with the word ‘Volunteer’ or suitable abbreviation, e.g. ‘VOL’, will be issued by Civil Defence, with whom they will be offered a temporary volunteer status.

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, for example, electricity supply in the aftermath of a storm.

It is important that there is close coordination 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 participate in relevant work of Local Co-ordination Groups. *(See Appendix B3 for contact details for utility companies)*

4.4.7 Private Sector

Private sector organisations may be involved in a major emergency situation in two ways.

They may be involved through, for example, 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 B5 - External Services & Resources)*

4.5 Mutual Aid

The Local Co-ordination Group may request assistance via mutual aid arrangements from a neighbouring county or declare a Regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. Support is most likely to be requested from:

- Laois County Council
- Kilkenny County Council
- Kildare County Council
- Wexford County Council
- Wicklow County Council

(See Appendix B2 for contact details of neighbouring LA's)

4.6 Regional Level Emergencies

In the event of a Regional level response the lead agency which has declared the regional level emergency will convene and chair the Regional Coordination Group. Depending on the circumstances, the goal of regional coordination may be achieved by using a single Regional Co-ordination Centre.

The method of operation of a Regional Co-ordination Centre will be similar to that of the Local Co-ordination Centre. *(See Appendix D5)*

4.7 National / International Assistance

In the event that it is necessary to seek assistance from neighbouring or other regions of the country, or from outside the state, this decision should be made by the lead agency in consultation with the other principal response agencies and lead Government Department Liaison Officer at the Regional Co-ordination Centre.

The South-East Regional Co-ordination Group should identify and dimension the level/type of assistance likely to be required and its duration. It should also seek to identify the possible options for sourcing such assistance, be that from neighbouring Regions, elsewhere in the state, the United Kingdom or from other EU member states.

The South-East Regional Co-ordination Group may also request assistance from 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 Carlow Local or South-East Regional Coordination Group to the National Liaison Officer at the Department of the Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Section 5 Preparedness for Major Emergency Response

5.0 Sub-Sections on Preparedness for Major Emergency Response
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- 5.1 The Incorporation of Major Emergency Management into the Council's business planning process**
- 5.2 Leadership in Major Emergency Management**
- 5.3 Documentation of a major emergency development program**
- 5.4 Key Roles in Major Emergency Response**
- 5.5 Support Teams**
- 5.6 Staff development programme**
- 5.7 Training programmes**
- 5.8 Internal Exercise programme**
- 5.9 Inter agency training and exercise programme**
- 5.10 Resource for Preparedness**
- 5.11 Procurement Procedures**
- 5.12 Major Emergency Preparedness Appraisal**
- 5.13 Public Information**

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

The development of Carlow 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 emergency management programme. This emergency management programme, which will be implemented on a three-year cycle, is designed to maintain a continuous level of preparedness within the county.

5.2 Leadership in Major Emergency Management

The Chief Executive of Carlow County Council (or designated alternative) is responsible for the Council's major emergency management arrangements and preparedness, as well as for the effectiveness of the agency's response to any major emergency, which occurs in its functional area. Responsibility for ensuring that resources are available for major emergency planning within the authority has been delegated to the Director of Services for Infrastructure, Water Services, Building Control and Emergency Services, whom the Chief Fire Officer will support along with other staff members within the Fire and Rescue Service.

5.3 Documentation of a major emergency development program

All documents relating to the preparation of this plan and subsequent documents relating to major emergency planning will be retained both electronically and in hard copy. Electronic devices containing the plan and supporting documentation will be issued to named individuals, these individuals will be responsible for the maintenance of up to date material within their own departments/sections. Each department will undertake an appraisal of their current operational plans and procedures to ensure compatibility with this document.

The Major Emergency Plan will be appraised and updated as required by the designated officer, in accordance with guidance document 2, A guide to preparing a major emergency plan. All changes and updates to this document will be recorded and notified to those individuals issued with the electronic copies. Significant changes to the document will be notified to persons named in the distribution list contained in *Appendix E1* of this document.

5.4 Key Roles in Major Emergency Response

Carlow County Council has nominated competent individuals and alternates to key roles to enable the agency to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in its Major Emergency Plan (*See Appendix A3*). These roles include;

- Controller of Operations
- On-Site Coordinator
- Chair of Crisis Management Team
- Chair of Local Coordination Group
- Chair of Regional Coordination Group
- Information Management Officers
- Media Liaison Officers
- Action Management Officers
- Support Staff

5.5 Support Teams

Support teams will be formed to support and assist individuals in key roles and will prepare Operational Protocols setting out the arrangements which will enable the agency's support teams to be mobilised and function in accordance with the arrangements set out in the Major Emergency Plan.

5.6 Staff development programme

The provisions of the Framework and the tasks arising from major emergency management arrangements involve a significant level of development activity, both within Carlow County Council and jointly with our regional partners.

In parallel with the risk assessment and mitigation processes and the preparation of the Major Emergency Plan, Carlow County Council has an internal programme to develop 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 in accordance with the Framework. It is also imperative that we not only develop within our own agency but that we also continue to work with the other PRAs through continued training and inter-agency exercises.

5.7 Training programmes

All personnel involved in the Major Emergency Plan will be required to participate in inter-agency training and exercises in order to ensure effective co-operation between agencies during a Major Emergency.

5.8 Internal Exercise programme

Exercises will be used to raise awareness, educate individuals on their roles and the roles of others and promote co-ordination and cooperation, as well as validating plans, systems and procedures.

Where an exercise to test the assumptions and procedures in this Plan is held, alert messages activating any element of the plan shall be preceded by the statement, **“THIS IS AN EXERCISE”**.

5.9 Inter agency training and exercise programme

Joint inter-agency training will be provided at a Local and Regional level, coordinated by the South East Regional Working Group. Exercises will follow on from this training to improve awareness and educate all involved in their roles and functions of the PRAs in the event of an emergency. Exercises will be performed on a three year cycle and will be based on the risk assessments.

5.10 Resource for Preparedness

Carlow County Council and the South-East Regional Steering Group shall provide a budget for major emergency preparedness, which reflects the expenditure required to meet the costs of implementing the agency’s internal preparedness, as well as the agency’s contribution to the regional level inter-agency preparedness.

5.11 Procurement Procedures

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: Part 12: Section 104’.

Arrangements have been put in place by certain sections of the Local Authority, with local suppliers to supply urgent goods when required and issue purchase orders the following day in the event of an emergency.

5.12 Major Emergency Preparedness Appraisal

Carlow County Council will carry out and document an annual internal appraisal of its preparedness for major emergency response, it shall then be sent for external appraisal to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in accordance with the Appraisal Document.

An annual appraisal of the South East Regional level preparedness shall also be documented, again in accordance with the Appraisal Document.

5.13 Public Information

There may be situations where it will be crucial for Carlow County Council to provide timely and accurate information directly to the public on an emergency situation. This will be especially important 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 coordinating the provision of information to the public as soon as it convenes. This activity will be coordinated by the lead agency. The Local Coordination 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, automatic text messaging, as well as through liaison with local and National media as well as with Social Media.

Section 6 The Generic Command, Control and Co-ordination Systems

6.0 Sub-Sections on Command, Control and Co-ordination Systems

- 6.1 Command arrangements**
 - 6.1.1 Within individual services belonging to the Council**
- 6.2 Control arrangements**
 - 6.2.1 Control of all services / sections of the Council which respond**
 - 6.2.2 Control of external organisations**
 - 6.2.3 Support arrangements for the Control function**
- 6.3 Co-ordination arrangements**
 - 6.3.1 Determination of Lead Agency**
 - 6.3.2 On-site Co-Ordination**
 - 6.3.3 Local Co-Ordination**
 - 6.3.4 Co-Ordination – specific circumstances**
 - 6.3.4.1 Mutual Aid**
 - 6.3.4.2 Incidents occurring on the Council boundaries**
 - 6.3.4.3 How Multi-site or wide area emergencies are to be dealt with**
 - 6.3.4.4 How Links with National Emergency Plans will operate**
 - 6.3.4.5 Links with National Government work**

6.1 Command arrangements

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

Carlow County Council shall exercise command over its own resources in accordance with its normal command structure.

6.1.1 Within individual services belonging to the Council

Carlow County Council shall exercise command over its own services in accordance with its normal command structure. At the site of an emergency, it will also exercise control over not only its own services but any additional services (other than the other principal response agencies) which the Local Authority mobilises to the site. Control of the Local Authority's services at the site of the Emergency shall be exercised by the Controller of Operations.

6.2 Control arrangements

Control involves the management of all local authority services at the site (or at each site) of the incident, and the management of the interaction with other response agencies. This control is exercised at the site by the designated Local Authority's Controller of Operations, and off-site by the Crisis Management Team.

Carlow 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 will be the principal response agency's Controller of Operations until relieved through the agency's pre-determined process.

(see section 6.3.4.2 for arrangements where an emergency affects an extensive area or occurs near the county boundaries).

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.

The roll 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 controllers of operations of the other principal response agencies 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 on-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 the information management system operates effectively;
- To liaise with his/her principal response agency's Crisis Management Team.

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 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-agency 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 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.

Local co-ordination Group:

Once the Local Co-ordination Group has been activated the mandate is as follows:

- 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.

Crisis Management Team

The Crisis Management Team is a strategic level management group within each principal response agency, which is assembled during a major emergency to:

- Manage, control and co-ordinate the agency's overall response to the situation;
- Provide support to the agency's Controller of Operations on site and mobilise resources from within the agency or externally as required;
- Liaise with national headquarters, in the case of An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive, and relevant Government Departments on strategic issues; and
- Ensure appropriate participation of the agency in the inter-agency co-ordination structures.

The members of the Crisis Management Team are usually the senior managers of the agency, who will meet at a pre-arranged location (County Buildings, Athy Road, Carlow) designated for this use. 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 representatives 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

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, Carlow County Council will exercise control over not only its own services but any additional services (other than the principal response agencies) which the Local Authority mobilises to the site.

6.2.3 Support arrangements for the Control function

Carlow County Council staff will respond to any Major Emergency in accordance with pre determined agreements. The Controller of Operations will be supported on site by all of the resources available from the Local Authority. The Crisis Management Team will provide off site support to the Controller of Operations.

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. (see section 6.2.1 of this document for Co-Ordination Arrangements).

6.3.1 Determination of 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 on the site of a Major Emergency.

Carlow County Council will assume the role of Lead Agency in one of two circumstances:

- Where the Local Authority is pre-designated as the lead agency. (See *Appendix A5 - Lead Agency Determination*)
- Where the categories in the Framework do not seem to apply and the lead agency is not obvious, the Local Authority will be the lead agency by "default"

When designated lead agency the “Controller of Operations” will become the “On-Site Coordinator” and assume responsibility for coordinating the response of all agencies operating at the incident scene.

The predetermined and default agencies for different types of emergencies are set out in *Appendix A5 - Lead Agency Determination*

6.3.2 On-site Co-ordination

On-site Co-ordination is facilitated by the On-Site Controller of operation and the On-Site Co-ordination group. The Controllers of Operations of the three PRAs should meet on-site at a suitable location and determine the lead agency. Where the Local Authority is designated as the Lead Agency, the LA Controller of Operations will assume the role of the On-Site Coordinator, noting the time the designation was made in the presence of the two other controllers, and ensuring that all parties involved in the response are made aware of the designation.

Dependent on the level of commitment at the site by the LA Controller it may be necessary to delegate some of the Controller functions when taking on the role of On-Site Coordinator. The rolls of the On-site Co-ordinator and the On-Site Co-ordination group have been outlined in *section 6.2.1 of this document*.

6.3.3 Local Co-ordination

When a major emergency has been declared and the lead agency determined, the relevant personnel of the lead agency should implement a Local Co-ordination Group mobilisation procedure. The representative of the lead agency will chair the Local Co-ordination Group, located in the Local Co-ordination centre, and will exercise the mandates associated with this position. The Local Coordination Group will comprise representatives of the other two PRAs, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer, an Action Management Officer (where considered appropriate), and representatives of other agencies and specialists, as appropriate.

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination and in doing so the activation of a "Regional Co-ordination Group" to maintain co-ordination of the principal response agencies involved from the extended “response region”.

Any one of the nominated Local Co-ordination Centres may be used as a Regional Coordination Centre, or a specific Regional Centre may be designated for this purpose. The choice of location will be determined in each situation by the Chair of the Local Co-ordinating Group declaring the regional level emergency and will depend on the location and nature of the emergency and any associated infrastructural damage.

6.3.4 Co-ordination – specific circumstances

In order to achieve co-ordination in other specific circumstances, if considered appropriate, representatives from other agencies and specialists will be invited to participate in the co-ordination process.

6.3.4.1 Mutual Aid

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. As they are national organisations, the Crisis Management Teams of the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána should arrange to provide the additional support required; Local Authorities will support each other on a mutual aid basis. (See section 4.5 and 4.6 of this document).

6.3.4.2 Incidents occurring on the Council 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 response from multiple units of the PRAs. There should be only one Controller of Operations for each of the three PRAs 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 How Multi-site or wide area emergencies are to be dealt with

Multi-site or wide area emergencies may require the setting up of multiple On-site Co-ordination centres which will feed into the one Local Co-Ordination Group.

Where an emergency affects an extensive area or occurs near the boundary of an adjoining authority, there should be only one Local Coordination Group managing the incident. With regard to the designation of Controller of Operations / On-Site Coordinator where there are multiple sites or the incident impacts over a large geographical area logistics will dictate the control and coordination arrangements required at the scene(s). In such circumstances consideration should be given to sectoring the incident sites and appointing an

On-Site Coordinator in each sector, all should be linked to one Local Coordination Centre.

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, an expanded first activated Local Coordination Group shall continue to coordinate the response and may be designated a Regional Coordination Centre in accordance with the plan for Regional Coordination. Examples of such incidents include widespread flooding and emissions from hazardous sites.

6.3.4.4 How Links with National Emergency Plans will operate

The Carlow MEP will operate as an integral part of any National plans developed for scenarios affecting the population on a National Level (see *Appendix D3*).

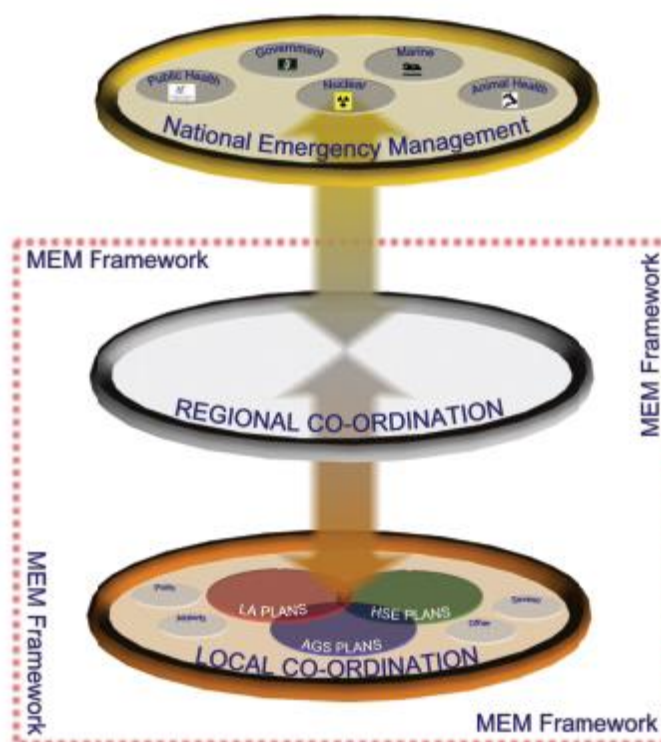


Figure 6: Linking Major Emergency Plans with National Plans and Other Plans

6.3.4.5 Links with National Government work

In every situation where a Major Emergency is declared, each principal response agency shall inform its parent Department of the declaration, as part of that agency's mobilisation procedure. The three parent Departments should then consult and agree which Department will be designated as Lead Department.

A national emergency may be activated in one of two ways, either as an escalation of a local emergency e.g. radiological contamination, or as a declared national emergency e.g. pandemic. In both instances the structures as set out in this document will operate. In every situation where a Major Emergency is declared, Carlow County Council will inform the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government of the declaration as part of their mobilisation procedure.

Section 7 The Common Elements of Response

7.0 Sub-sections setting out how the following common elements of the response to any major emergency will be implemented
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- 7.1 Declaring a Major Emergency**
- 7.2 Initial Mobilisation**
- 7.3 Command, Control and Communication Centres**
- 7.4 Co-ordination Centres**
- 7.5 Communications Facilities**
- 7.6 Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles**
- 7.7 Public Information**
- 7.8 The Media**
- 7.9 Site Management Arrangements**
- 7.10 Mobilising Additional Resources**
- 7.11 Casualty and Survivor Arrangements**
- 7.12 Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials**
- 7.13 Protecting Threatened Populations**
- 7.14 Early and Public Warning Systems**
- 7.15 Emergencies arising on Inland Waterways**
- 7.16 Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations**
- 7.17 Logistical Issues/ Protracted Incidents**
- 7.18 Investigations**
- 7.19 Community/ VIPs/ Observers**
- 7.20 Standing-Down the Major Emergency**

7.1 Declaring a Major Emergency

The escalation from “normal” emergency to “major” emergency is generally related to the incident scale, impact and duration. The Chief Executive and persons appointed by him/her as listed in *Appendix A2 – ‘Persons Authorised to Activate the Plan’*, are authorised to declare a Major Emergency on behalf of Carlow County Council.

A major emergency may be declared when the following circumstances prevail:

- The incident has the potential to escalate beyond the normal response capabilities of existing resources
- The scale, extent and duration of the incident requires the activation of specific additional measures
- The timely declaration of a major emergency will assist in preventing the escalation of the event beyond the control of existing resources or
- On receipt of a message declaring a Major Emergency by an authorised officer of any of the following:
 - An Garda Síochána
 - The Health Service Executive
 - A Government Department

7.1.1 Arrangements for declaring a major emergency

The Major Emergency Plan should be activated by whichever of the following agencies first becomes aware of the major emergency:-

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

A typical message to declare a major emergency shall be 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 **Carlow County Council Major Emergency Plan.**

7.1.2 Standard Format of the Information Message

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

M	Major Emergency Declared
E	Exact location of the emergency
T	Type of Emergency (Transport, Chemical, etc.)
H	Hazards, present and potential
A	Access / egress routes
N	Number and type of Casualties
E	Emergency service present and required

7.2 Initial Mobilisation

Carlow County Council Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure will be implemented immediately on notification of the declaration of a major emergency. When this Plan has been activated, each Local Authority's service requested shall respond in accordance with pre-determined arrangements. *(see appendix A1 – MEM Activation Plan)*

In some situations, there may be an early warning of an impending emergency. Mobilisation within Carlow 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.

7.3 Command, control and communication centre(s) to be used

In the event of a Major Emergency being declared initial mobilisation will be covered by Eastern Regional Control Centre (ERCC), who will communicate with the personnel on-site until such time as the Crisis Management Team and Co-ordination Groups have been established in accordance with national pre-determined arrangements.

(Please refer to Section 6 of this document for further details on the functions of these Teams/Groups).

7.4 Co-ordination Centres and Information Management

When acting as lead agency, Carlow County Council will be responsible for the establishment of both the On-Site Coordination Centre (OSCC) where the Controllers of Operations will act as On-Site Coordinator between the Controllers of Operations of the other two principal response agencies on site, and a Local Coordination Centre where the Local Authority can consult their partner agencies to manage the incident by coordinating their activities, sharing resources and information and resolving any issues which may hinder a successful outcome.

Carlow County Council will provide a Local Coordination Centre on behalf of the Principal Response Agencies for Major Emergencies at Carlow County Buildings, Athy Road, Carlow.

The Local Coordination Centre can offer the following:

- A spacious dedicated main area, where co-ordination activity takes place, i.e. where the relevant co-ordination group meet and work;
- An adjacent communications space through which most communications in and out of the center are routed;
- A range of adjacent meeting areas, including one large room;
- A refreshments area.

The Co-ordination Centre will be laid out and equipped in accordance with guidelines in the Framework Documentation

7.4.1 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. Carlow County Fire and Rescue Service's Prime Mover and Major Emergency Support Pod will be mobilised to the site and will provide equipment for use in the on-site coordination centre. *(See Appendix C2)*

7.4.2 Crisis Management Team

The Crisis Management Team is a strategic level management group within each PRA, which is assembled during a major emergency. It provides support to the PRAs 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. Carlow County Council's Crisis Management Team will be based at County Buildings, Athy Road, Carlow. *(Please refer to Section 6.2.1 of this document for further details).*

7.4.3 Location of pre-determined Local Co-ordination Centres

Carlow County Council have identified the following locations as suitable Local Co-ordination Centres for strategic level co-ordination;

1. Carlow County Buildings, Athy Road, Carlow.
2. Alternative - Carlow Central fire station

These buildings have been chosen to facilitate the effective working of the Local Co-ordination Group & Crisis Management Team. Strategic level co-ordination is more usually exercised at the Local Co-ordination Centre. All co-ordination centers will follow a generic model of operation. The generic centre illustrated below has the following characteristics.

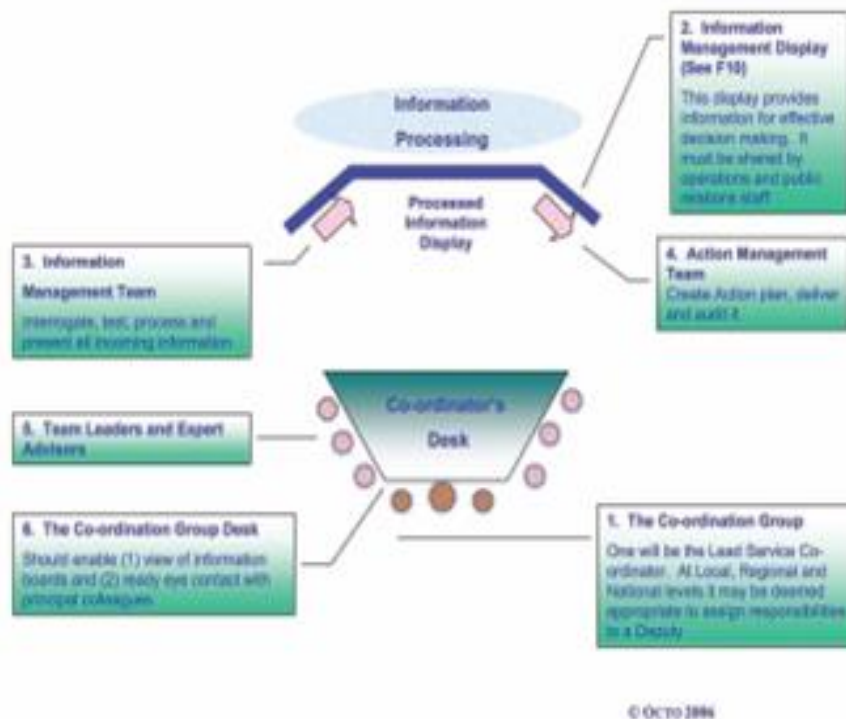


Figure 7.1
Generic Co-ordination Centre

Please refer to 'Guidance Document 12 – A Guide to Local Co-ordination Centres'

7.4.4 Regional Co-ordination Centre

The Local Co-ordination Centre will have the capacity to act as a regional co-ordination centre, should the Major Emergency be scaled up to a regional level.

7.4.5 Information Management

The role of Information Manager will be assigned to senior management (*see Appendix A3*). The function of the information management team will be to interrogate, test, process and present all incoming information required for the decision making process

- Action Management Officer / Team

The function of this role is to assemble an Action Plan (from information that has come from the Information Management System) and ensure that it is communicated to all agencies responsible for delivering it, and monitor / audit delivery as well as reporting this back to the Co-ordination Group (a generic system which operates at all levels). At less complex incidents one Officer may undertake both the information and action management functions. Where the demands of the Major Emergency require the appointment of a separate Action Management Officer, this person may be a representative from one of the agencies other than the lead agency.

- Team Leaders and Expert Advisors

A range of specialist team leaders and expert advisers may be assigned permanent or temporary seats at the Co-ordination Group desk. They may themselves lead teams either at or remote from the centre. Generally, they should advise or direct activity strictly within their mandate of Authorities. On occasion they may be invited to contribute to debate in a broader context. They need to be quite clear in which capacity they are acting at any juncture and adjust their perspective accordingly.

- Support Teams

Each PRA will put support teams in place for key roles and should prepare Operational Protocols setting out the arrangements which will enable the agency's support to be mobilised and function in accordance with this MEP.

7.5 Communications Facilities

Carlow County Council relies on technical communication facilities to enable it to function and for different units to communicate, both at the site and between the site and its command, control or communications centre. Radio and other communications facilities are vital tools for the Local Authority.

- Fire & Rescue Service

Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service as the Principal Emergency Service of Carlow County Council communicate mainly using Tetra Radio Communications and have additional communication equipment in the event of a Major Emergency, which it will bring to the site.

All appliances are equipped with Tetra Digital radios and have the ability to communicate within the functional area of County Carlow. The fire service also has UHF handheld radios.

Carlow Fire & rescue Service also operates an Incident Command Support Unit (ICSU). This vehicle is based in Carlow Fire Station and is mobilised to major and protracted incidents. It carries additional communications equipment, including a fixed Satellite Phone, mobile phone and fax line. It also carries a number of portable handheld UHF radios for use by the On-Site team. Via a repeater on the ICSU, and another repeater on County Hall, these radios can also communicate with a UHF base station radio located in the Crisis Management Team. It has 2 onboard computers and mobile internet. All of the On-Site Co-Ordination Groups IT and Comms equipment is stored and transported to the Major Emergency site onboard the ICSU.

OSCC, LCG & CMT can view incident details in real time by logging into the Incident Control Room desktop interface. *(see appendix C3 for details)*

- Civil Defence

Communication equipment can also be supplied by the Civil Defence. The Civil Defence uses Tetra as well as private mobile radio (VHF) for communication between vehicles and communication centers and hand-portable radio (UHF) for communication on site.

7.5.1 Inter-agency communication on site, including protocols and procedures

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) are provided for at Controller of Operations level as a minimum. For this purpose, the fire service will bring a set of hand-portable radios, dedicated specifically to inter-agency communication, to the site.

7.5.2 Communications between site and co-ordination centres

All communication between On-site Co-ordination Group and the Local Co-ordination centre shall pass between the Controller of Operations / On-site Co-Ordinator to the Local Co-Ordination group, supported by the work of trained Information Management Officers at the scene and at the co-ordination centres. Communications between the site to the co-ordination centre will be facilitated by way of the radio system available and through the use of Tetra as well as mobile and satellite phones as necessary. A full list of communication systems available, and contact details, are listed in *Appendix C5 – ‘Communications Systems for use during a Major Emergency’*.

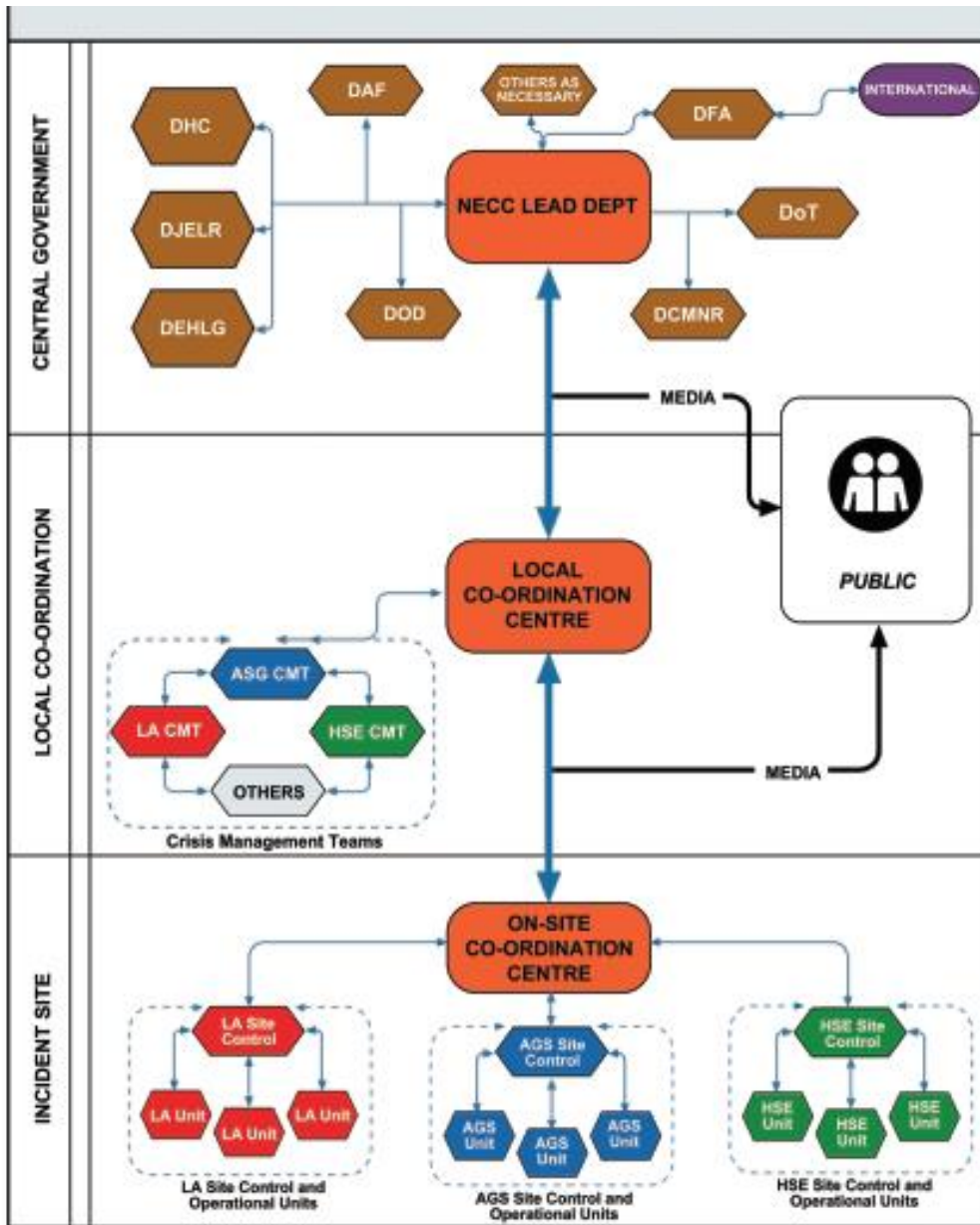


Figure 7.1 : Communication Routes

7.6 Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles

The following section sets out the arrangements for the principal response agencies to quickly identify/designate the “lead agency” once a Major Emergency has been declared and how the designated “lead agency” will undertake the coordination function and role as set out in the Framework. The arrangements associated with the “lead agency” function are applicable to all emergencies where an inter-agency response is required.

7.6.1 Lead Agency

One of the three PRAs will be designated as the lead agency for any emergency and will assume responsibility for leading co-ordination. There are two mechanisms for determining the lead agency in different situations; the three Controllers of Operations at the site should apply the mechanism in sequence in order to determine the “lead agency” for any emergency.

The first is by “**pre-nomination**”. *Appendix A5- “Lead Agency Predetermined Procedure”* of this document sets out the pre-nominated “lead agencies” for common incident types, and this should be the primary basis for determining “lead agency”.

The second is a “**default**” arrangement, where the categorisations outlined in the Framework do not seem to apply and the “lead agency” is not obvious. In these situations, the local authority will be the “default” lead agency.

7.6.2 Review and transfer of the Lead Agency

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, informing the Local Co-ordinating group. 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.

7.6.3 Lead Agency Co-ordination Function

In the event of Carlow 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 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 function of the lead agency for any emergency includes:

- 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

The provision of information to the public before, during and after the response to an incident takes two forms, warning and informing. In circumstances where it is possible to warn people in advance i.e. severe weather warnings, boil water notices etc the message content can be pre-prepared as part of specific sub-plans i.e. Flood, Water contamination, Event Management Plans etc.

Public information leaflets may also be made available at designated emergency reception facilities, area offices and libraries. Such leaflets/booklets cover issues such as what to expect in an emergency reception centre, how to recover from flooding and publications issued by the Department of Defence Office of Emergency Planning on self-help before, during and after an emergency.

Sudden onset events require rapid dissemination of information to the public and may include informing survivors and friends and relatives of those affected. It may also be necessary to advise on protection measures to populations at risk and the content of these messages may not be obvious until the On-Site Coordination Group assesses the impact of the event.

7.7.1 Council's role in situations where warning arrangements are needed

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 make the decision on how best to protect a threatened population, after consultation with the other Controllers of Operations.

The Local Co-ordination Group should manage 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.

7.7.2 Mediums of communication

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;

1. Carlow County Council internet service - useful for posting more information than would be communicable by emergency calls or broadcasts.
2. Social Media
3. Local broadcasters will also be called upon to broadcast messages on behalf of the local Authorities.
4. Carlow County Council emergency helpline service – An emergency helpline will be set up.

On a national level the public shall be informed by use of the following;

1. Television and Radio – arrangements exist whereby emergency announcements may be made on RTÉ television and radio channels.
2. Television Text Services – not for emergency alerts, but useful for posting more information than would be communicable by emergency calls or broadcasts.

Please refer to guidance document a 'Guide to working with the Media' for further information (See Appendix D3). Media Contacts are available in Appendix B3.

7.8 The Media

It must be assumed that the media will be present at the site of a major emergency, will respond quickly to developments and their presence may extend into days or weeks. Working to facilitate the needs of the media will help reduce the possibility of attempts at unauthorised access to the site of the emergency or other sites associated with the incident. All media briefings will be delivered from an agreed location and will be held jointly by the PRAs and coordinated by the lead agency.

7.8.1 Arrangements for liaison with the media

The media will respond quickly to a large-scale incident and this media presence may extend into days or weeks. It is the responsibility of the lead agency to establish 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. The Local Co-ordination Group will be responsible for official media statements and press releases off-site. *Please refer to guidance document 5 a 'Guide to working with the Media' for further information.*

7.8.2 Specify arrangements for media on-site

There shall be a media Liaison Officer appointed at both the On-site 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.

7.8.3 Arrangements for 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 Co-ordination 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 Arrangements for 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. 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 PRA 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

Major emergency sites are often complex, with issues of difficult terrain, poor access, danger and large numbers of responders in a small area. The successful management of such situations requires simple, clear and unambiguous site arrangements, which are understood and accepted by all. This section sets out and defines a site management arrangement that should be aspired to at all major emergency sites. The typical site plan is illustrated in Figure 7.1: Idealised Scene Management Arrangements.

Where, for operational reasons, this layout cannot be achieved, the principles of an Inner Cordon, within which rescue activities are undertaken, a safer area outside that cordon, where survivors are assembled and casualties treated, and an Outer Cordon, that restricts/controls access, should be applied as far as is reasonably practicable. One of the key roles of the Controller of Operations and on-site co-ordinator is to agree and develop a site management plan.

7.9.1 Generic site management elements/arrangements

Carlow County Council shall appoint a Controller of Operations at the site (or at each site) of the emergency, see *section 6.2 of this document*. The initial important task of the Controller of Operations in association with the other two Controllers is the development of a Site Management Plan. Once agreed, the resulting site plan should be implemented and communicated to all responding groups. *(See Appendix C1 for detailed information on Scene Management)*

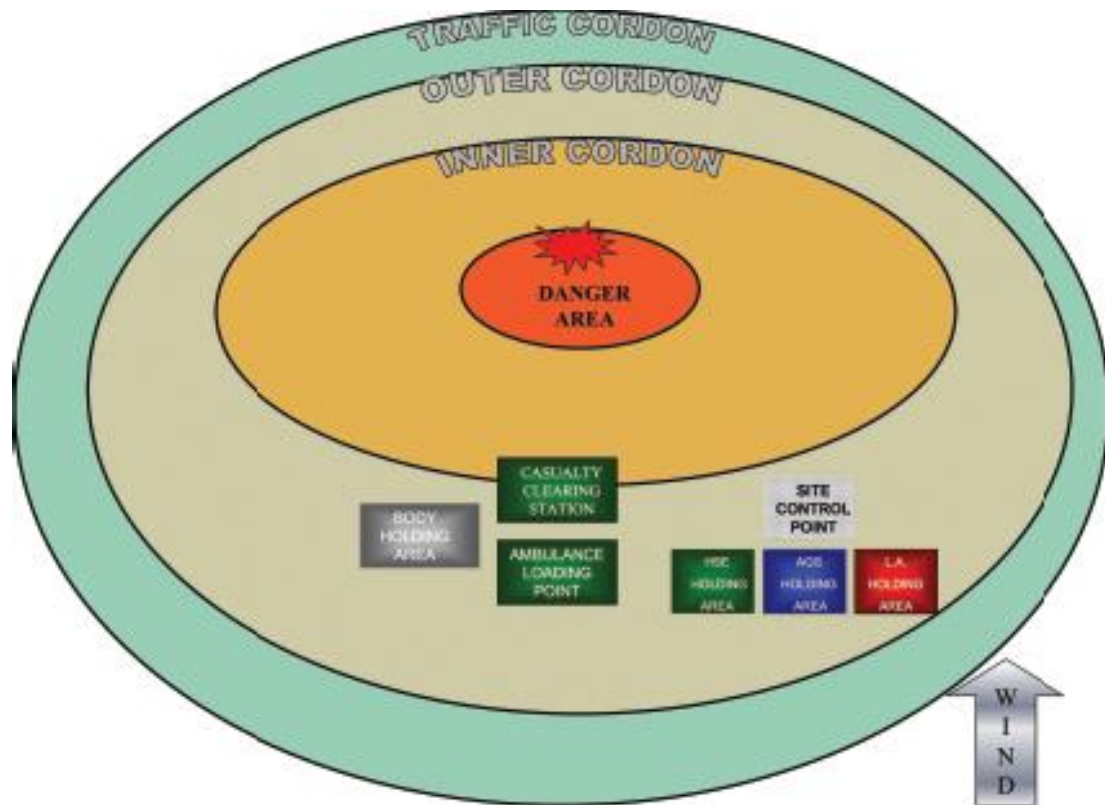


Figure 7.1: Idealised Scene Management Arrangements

The main components of a typical Site Plan should contain some or all of the following:

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

7.9.2 Control of access / identification of personnel and services of the Council

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 C1 for detailed information*). This will be done by An Garda Síochána after a decision by, and agreement with, the On-site Co-Ordination Group.

A Danger Area may also be declared where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel, over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations.

Identification of Personnel at the Site of a Major Emergency

- All uniformed personnel, responding to the site of a major emergency, should wear the prescribed uniform, including high visibility and safety clothing, issued by their agency. The service markings on this clothing should be made known in advance to the other organisations that may be involved in the response.
- Senior personnel who are acting in key roles, such as the On-Site Co-ordinator and the Controllers of Operations, should wear bibs designed and coordinated as follows:

Organisation	Bib Colour	Wording
Health Service Executive	Green and White Chequer	HSE Controller
Local Authorities	Red and White Chequer	Local Authorities 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 Co-ordinator clearly visible front and back. Below is an example of how the bibs should look for each of the responding agencies.



- Non uniformed personnel from Carlow County Council should attend the scene in high visibility jacket with the name Carlow Local Authority and their job function clearly displayed.

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 an Air Exclusion Zone be declared around the emergency site by the Irish Aviation Authorities. When a restricted zone above and around the site is declared, it is promulgated by means of a “Notice to Airmen” - NOTAM - from the Irish Aviation Authorities.

7.10 Mobilising Additional Resources

While the three principal response agencies may provide an appropriate response to the emergency and its consequences, the Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of the authority do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is expected to be extended, arrangements should be made to draw support from other agencies, organisations or authorities by:

- Requesting assistance from neighbouring local authorities;
- Mobilising the local voluntary emergency services
- Mobilising organisations who can provide specialist support
- Requesting assistance from national organisations

In requesting assistance from neighbouring local authorities the Controller should determine the levels, types and duration of assistance/support required and ensure the request is passed to either the authority’s Crisis Management Team or the Local Co-ordination Centre who will arrange to obtain the support via mutual aid arrangements, contact details to activate such arrangements are contained in *Appendix B1, B2,, B3, B4 & B5*

7.10.1 Mobilising Organisations

The Voluntary Emergency Services sector can provide additional equipment and support in the event of a major emergency. Details of the local Voluntary Emergency Services, the resources they can provide, and their mobilisation procedure is outlined in *Appendix B1*

Each Principal Response Agency with a linked Voluntary Emergency Services 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

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

Principal Response Agency	Linked Voluntary Emergency Service
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
Local Authority	Civil Defence

7.10.1.1 Mobilisation of Civil Defence

Carlow Civil Defence is managed by the Civil Defence Officer. On activation of this plan the Civil Defence Officer will be alerted and requested as appropriate to mobilise volunteers in accordance with the organisation's internal procedures. Where the organisation's volunteers are mobilised to the incident site, the Civil Defence Officer will deploy them under the control of the Local Authority Controller of Operations.

Please refer to section 4.4.1 of this document, details also given in [Appendix B1 & B4](#)

7.10.1.2 Mobilisation of Defence Forces

The mobilisation of the Defence Forces is dependent on the exigencies of other demands and on prior agreed arrangements. They do have a key role in responding to all emergency incidents involving improvised explosive devices when acting as an aid to the civil power. In such instances their Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) teams will be mobilised by An Garda Síochána.

Please refer to section 4.4.2 of this document, details also given in [Appendix B3](#)

7.10.1.3 Mobilisation of Red Cross

The Health Service Executive with whom they are linked will mobilise the local units of the Irish Red Cross Society. When required to operate in support of the local authority they will be mobilised by the HSE Controller of Operations

Please refer to section 4.4.3 of this document, details also given in [Appendix B1 & B4](#)

7.10.1.4 Mobilisation Voluntary Emergency Services Sector

Each Principal Response Agency with a linked Voluntary Emergency Services 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. A list of Voluntary Emergency Services and their emergency contact arrangements are listed in *Appendix B4*.

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. Utilities may be requested to provide representatives and/or experts to the On-Site Co-ordination Group, the Local Coordination Group and/or the Regional Co-ordination Group, as appropriate. A list of utilities and their emergency/out of hours contact arrangements are listed in *Appendix B3*.

Please refer to section 4.4.6 of this document for further details

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 equipment within the private sector is detailed in *Appendix B5*.

7.10.2 Arrangements for identifying and mobilising additional Organisations

The Local Authority Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of the authority do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is expected to be extended, the levels, types and duration of assistance/support are identified, and that the request for support is passed to either the Authority's Crisis Management Team or the Local Co-ordination Centre who will arrange to obtain the support via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring authorities.

Where resources that are held at a national level are required, as part of the management of the incident, requests for those resources should be directed by the lead agency to the Lead Government Department.

7.10.3 Arrangements for liaison with 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.

It is important that there is close coordination between the principal response agencies and utilities involved in or affected by an emergency.

*Please refer to section 4.6 of this document, details also given in **Appendix B1 and B3***

7.10.4 Arrangements for integration of casual volunteers as appropriate

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.

Please refer to section 4.4.5 of this document.

7.10.5 Arrangements for command, control, coordination and demobilisation of organisations mobilised to the site

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 organisations resides with that organisation.

Please refer to section 4.4.1 through 4.4.7 and section 7.10.1 of this document.

7.10.6 Mutual aid arrangement

The Local Co-ordination Group may request assistance via mutual aid arrangements from a neighbouring county or declare a Regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination.

Please refer to section 4.5 of this document.

7.10.7 Requests for out-of-region assistance

The decision to seek assistance from outside the region will be made by the lead agency, in association with the other principal response agencies, at the Local/Regional Coordination Centre.

Please refer to section 4.7 of this document.

7.10.8 Requests for international assistance

The Local Co-ordination Group may also request international assistance from Government. International resources may 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.

Please refer to section 4.7 of this document.

7.11 Casualty and Survivor Arrangements

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, and Survivors. Survivors will include all those individuals who are caught up in an emergency but not injured, such as, uninjured passengers from a transport accident or evacuees.

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.

7.11.1 Casualties and Survivors and the Local Authority's role in this

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.

Individuals may be divided into two main categories as follows:

- Casualties, including persons who are killed or injured,
- Survivors. These include all those individuals who are caught up in an emergency but not injured, such as, uninjured passengers from a transport accident or evacuees.

7.11.2 Injured

At the site of a major emergency, the priorities of the principal response 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.

7.11.2.1 Triage

Triage is a dynamic process of assessing casualties and deciding the priority of their treatment, using a two-stage process of triage sieve and triage sort. Following initial triage, casualties will normally be labeled, using Triage Cards, and moved to a Casualty Clearing Station. The purpose of this labeling is to indicate the triage category of the casualty, to facilitate the changing of that category, if required, and to record any treatment, procedure or medication administered. A standard card with Red (Immediate), Yellow (Urgent), Green (Delayed) and White (Dead) sections is normally used for this purpose.

7.11.2.2 Transporting lightly injured and uninjured persons from the site

It should be noted that while some casualties will be transported to the Receiving Hospital(s) by the Ambulance Service with assistance from the Local Authority, some casualties may leave the site by other means and may arrive at the designated Receiving Hospital(s), or other hospitals, in cars, buses, etc.

7.11.2.3 Casualty Clearing

Patients must be moved to the Casualty clearing station. The Casualty clearing station will be established by the ambulance service, in consultation with the Health Service Executive. At this location the casualties are collected, further triaged, treated, as necessary, and prepared for transport to hospital. The Health Service Executive Controller will, in consultation with the Site Medical Officer and the designated receiving hospitals, decide on the hospital destination of casualties.

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 effect 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.

Bodies to be moved 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 Local Authorities can assist An Garda Síochána in this function.

7.11.3.1 Role of the Coroner

The Coroner is an independent judicial officer, who has responsibility for investigating all sudden, unexplained, violent or unnatural deaths. It is the task of the Coroner to establish the 'who, when, where and how' of unexplained death. All such deaths in Ireland are investigated under the Coroners' Act, 1962.

7.11.3.2 Arrangements for dealing with fatalities, both on and off-site, including Body Holding Areas and Temporary Mortuaries

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. 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).

Temporary Mortuaries

The South East Regional Steering Group has published a Mass Fatality Plan for use by the PRAs in the South East Region. The plan outlines the interagency response to an incident involving mass fatalities in this region. Arrangements within this regional plan are for the mobilisation of the South East Body Holding Units in relation to a Category I or II mass fatalities incident. (See Appendix D4).

For Category III incidents, there is a national plan to mobilise the 'National Temporary Mortuary Activation'.

7.11.3.3 Identification of the deceased

The Coroner, with the assistance of An Garda Síochána, has overall responsibility for the identification of bodies and remains and s/he is entitled to exclusive possession and control of a deceased person until the facts about their death have been established. A full post-mortem and forensic examination will be carried out on every body from a major emergency and each death will be the subject of an Inquest. The post-mortem is carried out by a Pathologist, who acts as the 'Coroners Agent' for this purpose.

7.11.4 Survivors

A Survivor Reception Centre should be designated and established at the earliest possible opportunity. Transport from the Survivor Reception Centre to

home/meet relatives/safe place will be arranged as soon as it is practicable. This responsibility will lie with Carlow County Council.

7.11.4.1 Arrangements for dealing with uninjured survivors who require Support

A Survivor Reception Centre should be designated and established at the earliest possible opportunity. The On-Site Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the other Controllers, should determine if such a centre is to be established, and its location in the site management plan. It is the responsibility of Carlow County Council to establish and run this centre.

Carlow County Council has identified the following as suitable buildings for setting up a survivor centre;

- Recreation Centre
- Parish Hall
- Any other building that is large enough to accommodate large amounts of people.
- Local Church
- Local School

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. Provision should be made at this centre for the immediate physical and psychosocial needs of survivors (e.g. hot drinks, food, blankets, telephones, first aid for minor injuries, etc.).

The assistance of Civil Defence and the voluntary ambulance services may be required to provide a variety of services at the Survivor Reception Centre. The Survivor Reception Centre should be secure from any unauthorised access and provide the maximum possible privacy for survivors.

(See Appendix B6, for Temporary Accommodation List).

7.11.5 Casualty information

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.

7.11.5.2 Casualty information

To facilitate this Casualty Bureau, 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. The local Authority may assist in the collection and collation of casualty data. This information may then

be used to provide to family and friends. Any information collected on any casualty is transferred via An Garda Síochána to the Casualty Bureau, who will generally set up an information hot line, in order that concerned family and friends may inquire about individuals.

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

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.

7.11.7 Non-National Casualties

In some incidents an emergency may involve significant numbers of casualties from other jurisdictions. In such circumstances the Local Co-ordination Centre should notify the relevant embassy if the nationality of the victims is known. The Department of Justice should be approached if assistance is required in obtaining interpreters from private sector providers. The Department of Foreign Affairs (which operates an out of hours Duty Officer System) should also be approached for appropriate assistance and liaison purposes. *(See Appendix B3 for contact numbers).*

7.11.7.1 Foreign language communication resources

Advice may be sought from An Garda Síochána as to the use of interpreters. Generally the local Garda Station will have a list of approved interpreters who may be called upon in the event of an emergency. Advice may also be sought from the Department of Foreign Affairs. *(See Appendix B3).* There is also a list of interpreting services in *Appendix B5.*

7.11.8 Pastoral and Psycho-social Care

The On-Site Co-ordinator will ensure that, where appropriate, pastoral services are mobilised to the site and facilitated by the PRAs in their work with casualties and survivors. Similarly, individual services should make arrangements for necessary pastoral services at any other locations associated with the emergency, such as hospitals.

7.11.8.1 Responsibility of Pastoral and psycho-social support Arrangements

Pastoral and psycho-social support arrangements for casualties and other affected members of the public are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive. Requests for such care can be made through the HSE crisis management team which will then make the appropriate arrangements.

7.12 Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials

This section outlines the response to emergencies involving the release of materials, which are harmful to the population. Pollution of the coastline and environmental disasters are not covered in this section, they are contained in the Pollution plan. It should also be noted that while this section advocates a generic all hazards approach, the specific arrangements required for hazardous sites, which fall under the remit of the Seveso regulations are contained in Section 12.

7.12.1 Major Hazardous Material Incidents

The Local Authority 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 CCBRN incident are contained in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Suspect Chemical and Biological Agents arising from terrorist activity

7.12.2 CCBRN incidents

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a CCBRN (*CCBRN meaning terrorist incidents involving C - conventional explosives; C - chemical substances; B - biological agents; R - radiological and N - nuclear material*) incident will be detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Suspect Chemical and Biological Agents (under development). These protocols deal with a range of matters relevant to managing such incidents, including the identification of the materials involved. They also provide for involvement of the National Poisons Information Centre and the National Virus Reference Laboratory. Where terrorist involvement is suspected, An Garda Síochána will act as the lead agency.

7.12.3 Plan for Biological Incidents

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a biological incident will be detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Suspect Chemical and Biological Agents (under development).

7.12.4 Plan for National public health (infectious diseases) plan

For infectious diseases such as Avian Flu, Pandemic Flu, Foot and Mouth etc. Carlow County Council will provide assistance under the command of the lead government department.

7.12.5 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 (in Draft)

7.12.6 Decontamination

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 services have 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 Local Authority fire service may use its fire-fighter decontamination facilities, or improvised equipment may be used prior to the arrival of dedicated equipment. Where it is decided that persons should undergo this practice, it should be carried out under the guidance of medical personnel. It should be noted that emergency decontamination carries risks for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and the injured. It may be more appropriate in certain circumstances for outer clothing to be removed and blankets provided as a temporary measure to alleviate potential harm through surface contact with contaminants.

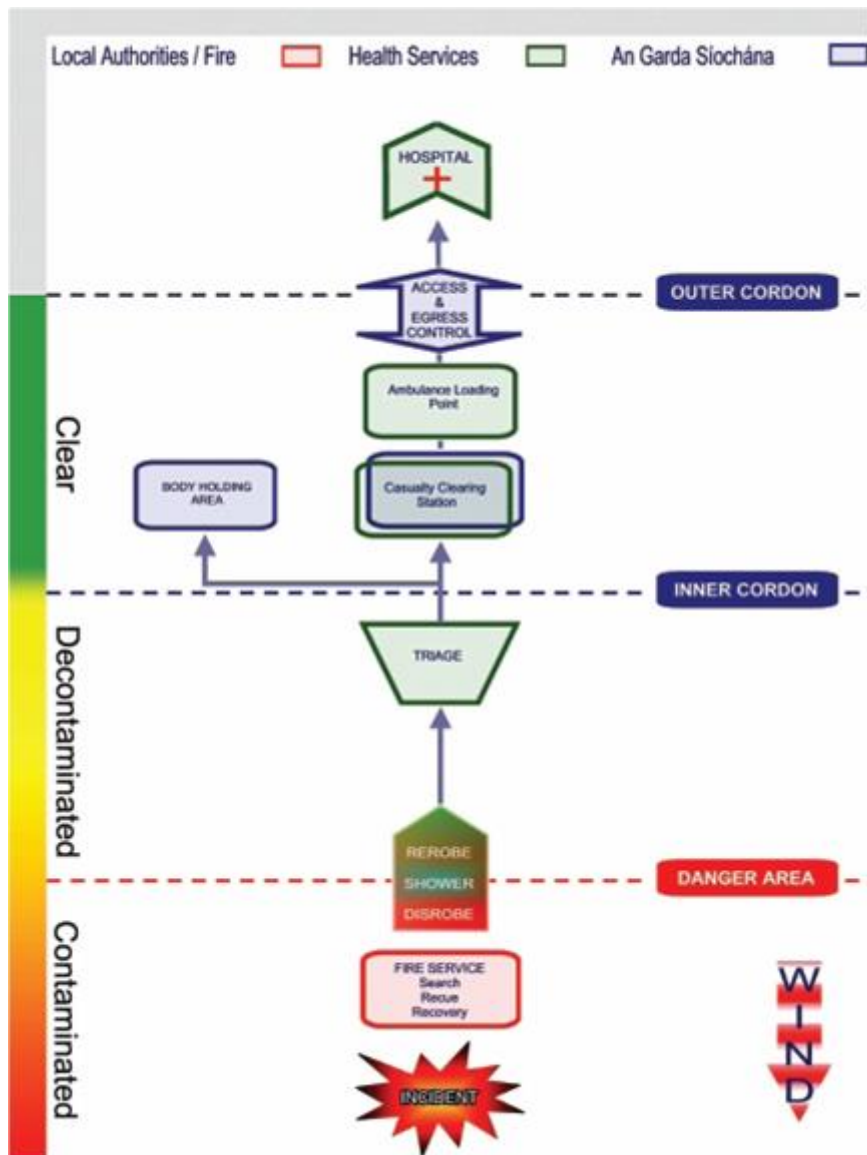


Figure 7.2: Managing Hazardous Materials

7.13 Protecting Threatened Populations

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. 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.

7.13.1 Provisions of Advice to Threatened Populations

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. 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.

7.13.2 Evacuation arrangements

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. Evacuation is usually undertaken on the advice of the Local Authority or Health Service Executive. Where decided upon, the process of evacuation will be undertaken by An Garda Síochána, with the assistance of the other services. In some circumstances, personnel from all services may have to assist in carrying it out. A suitable evacuation assembly point will need to be established and rest centres set up by Carlow County Council.

Personnel from the local authority and from voluntary agencies will staff rest centres. The centres will provide security, welfare, communication, catering and medical facilities. Evacuees should be documented and basic details passed to the casualty bureau. The Local Authority will assist in this role.

Temporary Accommodation may also be required (*see Appendix B6 - Accommodation List for the Carlow Area*).

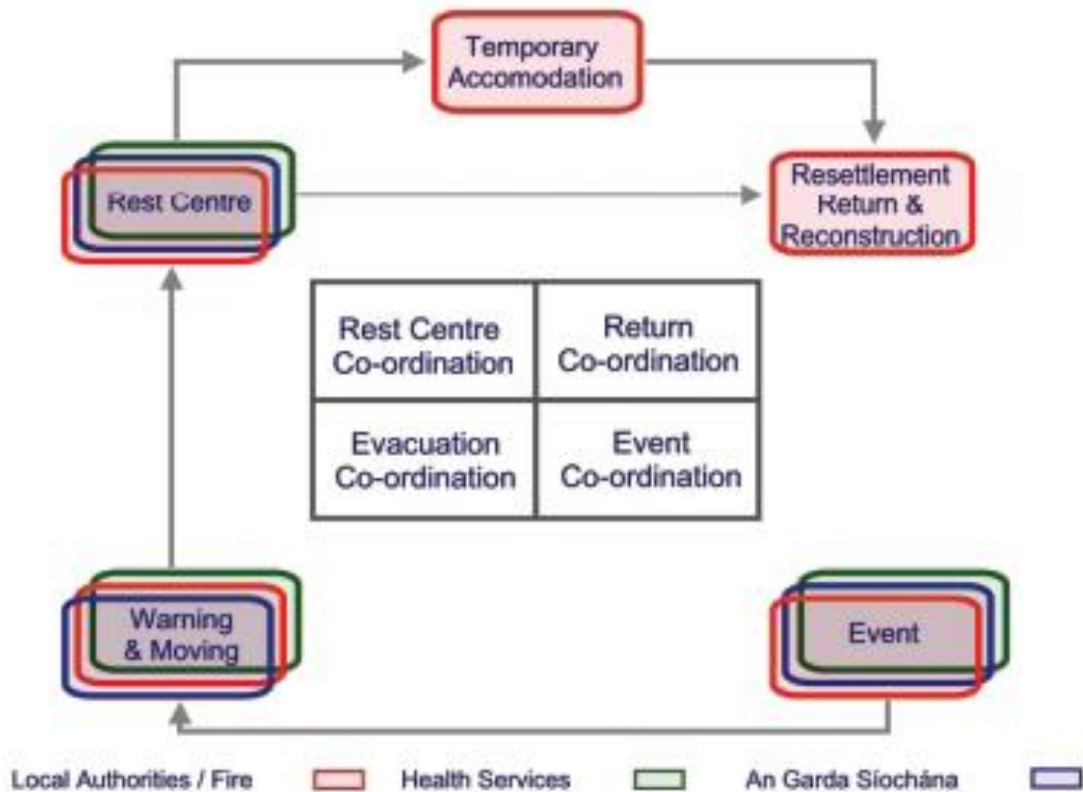


Figure 7.2: Structure of Evacuation

7.13.3 Arrangements for the involvement of The Public Health service

Where an emergency results in a real or perceived threat to public health by, for example, the release of chemical, radioactive or biological agents, the contamination of water or food supplies, or the spread of contaminated flood water, it can be anticipated that there will be considerable concern among both the persons immediately affected and the wider public. In such situations, the

Health Service Executive Controller should ensure that the local public health services are informed of the situation as soon as possible so that they can become involved in the response at the earliest possible stage.

7.14 Early and Public Warning Systems

Carlow County Council avails of the forecasting arrangements of the Irish Meteorological service via the Public Service Severe Weather Warning system which covers the meteorological conditions/elements – wind, rain, snow, fog, thunderstorm and coastal storm surge. The emphasis is on warning of weather events that will cause significant disruption or constitute a significant risk for people.

Using the data from the Meteorological service can provide early warning of the potential risk, however major emergencies by definition are unforeseen events, which occur instantaneously and time may not allow for any advance warning to the public.

7.14.1 Monitoring potentially hazardous situations

Early warning systems are currently set in place for Severe Weather forecasts. This is a 24 hour service provided by Met Éireann. There may be a need to inform the public of the current situation or of possible evacuation.

Please refer to Section 11.1 of this document.

7.14.2 How warnings are to be disseminated

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

- Door to Door
- Radio and T.V. broadcasting
- Local helpline / information line
- Web services and internet services
- Social Media
- Automated Text services
- Establish site specific warning systems.

7.15 Emergencies arising on Inland Waterways

The Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to Inland Waterway emergencies. Carlow County Council's Fire & Rescue Service and Civil Defence can provide assistance for water rescue / recovery.

7.15.1 Liaison with the Irish Coast Guard

Carlow County Council's Fire & Rescue Service and Civil Defence can provide assistance for water rescue / recovery. Both the Fire Service and the Civil Defence have marine band radios and can liaise with the Coast Guard as necessary.

7.15.2 Receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to inland waterway emergencies

The Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to Inland Waterway emergencies. 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 Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations

This section outlines how Carlow County Council proposes to exercise its responsibilities in relation to its duties as an employer under the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act(s).

7.16.1 Response Personnel - Safety, Health and Welfare

Carlow County Council is responsible for the Safety, Health and Welfare of its staff responding to emergencies and should operate its own safety (including personal protective equipment) and welfare management procedures. *Please refer to a 'Local Authority Organisational Safety Statement for further information.*

7.16.2 Safety of the Council's rescue personnel

When working in the environment of a Major Emergency the On-Site Co-ordinator will apply normal incident and safety management arrangements, a 'Safety Officer' will generally be appointed having responsibility for the oversight and management of the safety of the Council's rescue personnel. All other relevant officers will continue to exercise command over their own personnel working in the area.

7.16.3 Danger area procedures

A 'Danger Area' may be declared at the site where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel over and above that which would normally pertain at

emergency operations. The Council is responsible for the health and safety of its staff when they operate within the 'Danger Area'.

Each service should establish from the On-Site Co-ordinator if a Danger Area has been defined (*see Section 7.9.1 of this document*) as part of site management arrangements and, if so, what particular safety provisions may apply.

7.16.4 Danger area evacuation

Where a situation deteriorates to a point where the officer 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 for ten seconds on, ten seconds off, will be given. All personnel should withdraw on hearing this signal to a pre-determined safe zone.

7.16.5 Physical Welfare

Carlow County Council will make arrangements for the provision of welfare facilities to the responders. Each responding agency shall operate a shift system by agreement and responsibility for the physical welfare of responders will be assigned to a designated officer appointed from the local authority.

Please refer to section 7.17.3 of this document.

7.16.6 Psycho-social support for personnel

Those who are particularly traumatised by the events of a Major emergency may require skilled professional help, this is/will be provided by Carlow County Council. Currently a careline exists which enables employees and their immediate family to access confidential advice and support 24 hours a day 365 days a year. These facilities may also be made available to support staff, even if they are not directly involved at the scene.

7.17 Logistical Issues/ Protracted Incidents

By definition a major emergency will require the deployment of considerable numbers of personnel. The Fire & Rescue Service as the Council's front line emergency service will make special arrangements for the maintenance of a reserve in the case of a protracted incident and will maintain fire cover for the County. Civil Defence and Voluntary sector resources may have to examine their initial deployment in order to maintain the required response over a protracted period. The Local Authority's Controller of Operations when arranging the logistical needs of the resources under his/her control must consider these issues and should appoint an officer to coordinate all personnel welfare needs on site.

7.17.1 Arrangements for rotation of front line rescue / field staff

Front line rescue / field staff will be relieved at protracted incidents in accordance with the Local Authority Safety, Health and Welfare arrangements. Crews from neighbouring Counties may be called upon to assist and support the emergency.

7.17.2 Re-organising normal emergency and other services cover

Staff welfare arrangements need to be given priority in the recovery stage of an incident, so that the needs of all staff, both emergency response teams and general staff (including management), are catered for. In addition, the needs of staff that are not directly involved in responding to the incident should also be considered. Those members of staff who continue in their normal work are supporting colleagues in the emergency response and may be taking on additional work in the process. They can be as critical to the organisation's response as those involved at the 'coalface'.

7.17.3 Arrangements for initial and ongoing welfare for field staff

The Local Authority Controller should ensure that appropriate rest and refreshment facilities are provided for response personnel at the site, as well as for survivors. Staff welfare will be considered at all times. Civil Defence may be called upon to provide or aid in the administration of such needs.

Welfare facilities such as toilets etc may also be required and supplied by Carlow County Council. The Local Authority will strive and endeavour to provide meals at all meal times or every 4/5 hours during an incident to field staff.

A Site Logistics Officer appointed from the local authority should be appointed to manage Welfare Arrangements.

7.18 Investigations

It is vital that as soon as all has been done to save life and minimise injury, that no unnecessary damage or disturbance of fabric is caused that would prevent loss of evidence as to the factors that contributed to the incident. All resources of Carlow County Council will ensure as far as possible the management of the incident is in accordance with the requirements for forensic examination by An Garda Síochána.

7.18.1 Investigations arising from the emergency

The scene of a suspected crime should be preserved 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 members of Local Authority staff on their involvement.

The Controller of Operations should ensure that the information management system is utilised to undertake and/or supervise the completion of any necessary reports and documentation for the incident, to ensure that a contemporary, accurate report is promptly made available as required by An Garda Síochána in their investigations of emergency incidents. Typical examples of investigative requirements include:

- Post-mortem and Coroner's hearings
- Fire Investigation
- Accident Investigation
- Public or judicial enquiries
- Criminal Investigation

7.18.2 Minimise disruption of evidence

The preservation of the site of a major emergency, which results from criminal action, is of paramount importance and should receive a priority rating from the outset by all PRAs. 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. While the priority is the protection of life, the provisions of the Framework are intended to assist An Garda Síochána's investigative role.

7.18.3 Other parties with statutory investigation roles

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 include the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Rail Accident Investigation Unit (RAIU). An Garda Síochána is responsible for carrying out criminal investigations.

Any agency including the Local Authority, with an investigative mandate should liaise in the first instance with the On-Site Co-ordinator, who will direct them to the Controller of Operations of An Garda Síochána.

7.19 Community / VIPs / Observers

Public representatives and other dignitaries may wish to attend the site of the emergency, as well as associated facilities, such as hospitals, emergency reception shelters, mortuaries etc, to express sympathy to the injured and bereaved, and to support the emergency response workers. Carlow County Council will in consultation with the other PRAs through the Local Coordination Group, make provisions for public representatives and the public to contact the Council by establishing a help line and will facilitate such visits if appropriate.

7.19.1 How links are to be established with communities affected by an Emergency

Where communities are affected by a major emergency effort should be made to establish contacts/links with a community utilising established links such as Community Groups / Public Representatives and Community Liaison Officers within in the community.

7.19.2 Arrangements for receiving VIPs who wish to visit

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.

Enquiries in relation to such visits should be directed to the Local Coordination Group where arrangements will be made with the Media Liaison Officers to facilitate such arrangements. Any requests for a briefing on the situation should be directed to the Local Coordination Group. Requests for visits to agency specific locations should be referred to the Local Authority management.

7.19.3 Arrangements for national / international observers

National and International observers may request to attend the incident. 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. The Local Co-ordination Group should make arrangements for any such observers.

7.20 Standing-Down the Major Emergency

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.

The coordination structures may need to continue in some format for a period to address some of the issues remaining after the response to the emergency, which led to the activation of this plan, has been formally stood down.

7.20.1 How the status of the emergency will be stood-down

At a major emergency site only the On-Site Co-ordinator may declare the emergency to be 'stood down'. This declaration can only be made after consulting with the other Controllers of Operations at the site and the Local Coordination Group. 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.

The plan may be stood down generally following agreement by the three principal response agencies responding to the emergency, or in respect of all or certain local authority services following consultation with the other principal response agencies.

The below formal message content for declaring the stand down of the Carlow County Council Major Emergency Status can be used by any of the authorised officers of Carlow County Council.

This is (Name, rank and service)

The response to the (Type of incident)

Has been completed at (Location)

As an authorised officer I declare that a major emergency status is stood down.

The recovery phase of the Carlow County Council Major Emergency Plan is now activated (State Date & Time)

7.20.2 Operational Debrief

When the incident has ended, Carlow County Council will be obliged to give a debrief to the staff members of the service's that were involved in the emergency. In addition, the two other agencies involved in the incident will hold a series of operational debriefs. Carlow County Council will review the inter-agency co-ordination aspects of the response after every declaration of a major emergency.

A multi-agency debrief will then be held and lessons learned will be incorporated into this Plan. 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.

Multi-agency debriefs should consider the contribution provided by other, non-emergency service agencies to expand the knowledge and learning process that debriefs should collate. This is notwithstanding the potential conflict of interest that may result in later investigations. This aspect should be considered when inviting agencies other than emergency services to the debrief.

Operational debriefs should not be confused with diffusing welfare sessions for staff, which should form part of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) programmes arranged by individual organisations. The thrust of any such

debriefs would be to identify areas for improvement in procedures, equipment and systems. They should not be forums for criticising the performance of others.

Debriefs should not interfere with or comment on investigations into the incident carried out by investigative or judicial Authorities. It is important to realise that such debriefs, and related documents, would be disclosable to individuals involved in legal proceedings.

Section 8 Agency Specific Elements and Sub-Plans

8.1 Agency Specific Plans

Local Authorities are repositories of many plans. One of the benefits of this Major Emergency Plan is that the structures and arrangements contained within it represent an umbrella framework for all of the Carlow County Council response plans throughout different departments, sections and functions.

The generic response arrangements set out in the Major Emergency Plan will govern Carlow County Council's response to such sites/events and specific situations, whether a major emergency is declared or not.

8.2 Sub-Plans in use in Carlow County Council

Carlow County Council currently has or is in the process of preparing specific plans, sub-plans/standard operating procedures etc. for the following, which are detailed in Appendix 2.

- Fire & Emergency Operational Plan (Section 26)
- Severe Weather Plan
- Flood Plan
- Pollution Plan
- Drinking Water Incident Response Plan (DWIRP)
- Wastewater Incident Response Plan (WINREP)
- Rail Incident Response Plan
- South East Region Mass Fatality Plan

Section 9 Plan for Regional level Coordination

9.1 Plan for Regional Level Coordination

Each PRA has participated in the preparation of a Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination, *Appendix D5*, which sets out arrangements to respond at regional level. Carlow County Council is among four other Local Authorities in the South East Region (see *section 2.4*). In certain circumstances, the local response to a major emergency may be scaled up to a regional level. This may occur where the nature of an emergency is such that the:

- Resources available in the local area where the incident occurs do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner; or,
- Consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area; or,
- Incident(s) is spread over the area of more than one Local Authority or Division of An Garda Síochána; or,
- Incident occurs at or close to a boundary of several of the PRAs.

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 Co-ordination Group". The primary function of the Regional Co-ordination Group is to maintain co-ordination of the PRAs involved from the extended "response region".

*Please refer to section 6 of this document for a more in-depth examination at a Regional Level Major Emergency Response and also *Appendix D3 - 'A Guide to Miscellaneous Issues'*. *Guidance document 13: Section 4.**

Section 10 Links with National Plans

10.1 National Emergency Plans

Each principal response agency should provide for working with appropriate national bodies and responding to and activating appropriate aspects of their Major Emergency Plan following requests arising from national emergency situations. *Please refer to section 6.3.4.4/ 6.3.4.5 of this document for further details.*

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 (in Draft)

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 expected to be detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Emergencies arising from Infectious Diseases Pandemics (to be developed)

10.1.3 Animal Health Plan

For infectious diseases such as Avian Flu (The Department of Agriculture and Food: 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. Carlow County Council will provide assistance under the command of the lead government department.

10.2 Activation on request from Irish Coast Guard

The Carlow Major Emergency Plan may also be activated by any Principal Response Agency in response to a request from the Irish Coast Guard, following a threatened or actual emergency in the Irish Maritime Search and Rescue Region.

10.3 Activation on request from a Minister of Government

The Major Emergency Plans of the principal response agencies may be activated by an agency in response to a request from a Minister of Government in light of an emergency/crisis situation.

Section 11 Severe Weather Plans

11.1 Sub-Plans for responding to severe weather 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 the 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. On Fridays before a holiday period it may be appropriate to issue a preliminary warning or weather watch to Local Authorities.

Not all severe weather events will be major emergencies, but the principles and arrangements for a co-ordinated response to major emergencies should inform all response agencies to severe weather events. Local Authorities should ensure that effective arrangements are in place to receive and respond promptly to public service severe weather warnings issued by Met Éireann.

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.

11.1.1 Flooding Emergencies

Carlow County Council have prepared a 'Flood Plan' in accordance with the Multi-Agency Protocol 10 - MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE TO FLOOD EMERGENCIES (*see Appendix D4 for Carlow County Council 'Flood Plan' and Appendix D3 for Protocol 10*).

11.1.2 Severe Weather Conditions (Excluding Flooding Emergencies)

Carlow County Council have prepared a 'Severe Weather Plan' in accordance with Guidance Document 14 - A Guide to Severe Weather Emergencies (*see Appendix D4 for Carlow County Council 'Severe Weather Plan' and Appendix D3 for Guidance Document 14*).

Section 12 Site and Event Specific Arrangements and Plans

12.1 Site and Event Specific Arrangements and Plans

The functional area of this plan in the case of Carlow County Council is the administrative county of Carlow. Carlow County Council incorporates the Municipal Districts of Carlow, Muinebheag and Tullow.

Carlow County Council has responsibility for an area which includes large shopping centres and nightclubs, the M9 motorway, large colleges and schools, the main Dublin to Waterford rail line, natural gas pipeline, several water treatment plants, E.S.B. stations, several flood plains in urban areas and in addition there are a number of establishments involved either in industrial activities and the storage and use of hazardous chemicals.

The most recent risk assessment identified, but not limited to, the following risks having the potential to be a major emergency.

- Severe Weather/Urban Flooding
- Aircraft Collision / Loss
- Water Contamination
- Fire/ Major Crowd Safety and Civil Disorder
- Major RTA/ Hazmat
- Rail Accident
- Industrial Fire/Explosion
- Critical Infrastructure

The Fire Authority and the Planning Department are actively involved in inspection and enforcement activities across the County to ensure that owners and occupiers of establishments comply with regulations such as:

- The Fire Services Act 1981 and 2003
- The Building Control Act 1990 and 2007
- The Planning & Development Act 2001

All outdoor displays of public entertainment comprising an audience of 5,000 or more are subject to the Planning & Development Act 2001 Part XVI (licensing of outdoor event regulations) and Event Safety Management Plans for such events are lodged with Carlow County Council's Planning Department. These plans contain details of arrangements for the response to an emergency occurring at these events and are subject to multi-agency approval.

Although there are no Airports within the boundaries of Carlow County Council, that does not alleviate the risk of a mid-air collision or loss of aircraft occurring within the County boundaries as several passenger and military flight paths pass across the county.

Where specific plans/arrangements exist for responding to other emergencies, such as pre-incident plans, these will be stored in hard and soft copy on the County Fire and Rescue Service's Incident Command Support Unit and will also be available on the Council's network. These site specific plans will set out the generic arrangements governing the response to such sites/events, whether a major emergency is declared or not.

12.1 SEVESO sites

The Health & Safety Authority has been nominated as the Central Competent Authority for Ireland and, as such, is charged with the enforcement of the Regulations. The Principal Response Agencies including Carlow County Council are each designated under the Irish regulations as a Local Competent Authority. In relation to an upper tier site, each relevant local competent authority is required to prepare an external emergency plan for action outside the establishment, which shall include arrangements for co-ordinating off-site action and resources.

The industry concerned is required to inform the public in the vicinity of the plant regarding the nature of the hazards and to draw up an on-site emergency plan.

Currently there are no such SEVESO sites in the County of Carlow. There are however six such sites within the South East Region and members of Carlow County Council are actively involved in the Regional Seveso Sub-Committee and participate in the exercising of these organisations' External Emergency Plans.

Section 13 The Recovery Phase

13.0 Sub-Sections on The Recovery Phase
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13.1 Support for Individuals and Communities

13.1.1 Supporting individuals and communities affected by the emergency

13.1.2 Managing of public appeals and external aid

13.2 Clean-Up

13.2.1 Arrangements for clean up of sites / removal of debris/decontamination of sites of emergency and the Council's role in this

13.3 Restoration of Infrastructure and Services. Specify how restoration of infrastructure and services is to be achieved, and the Council's role in this

13.3.1 Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the situation

13.3.2 Procedure for liaison with utilities

13.3.3 How the order of priorities are to be determined

13.3.4 Protection measures against continuing hazards

13.1 Support for Individuals and Communities

Although the emergency response stage may have passed, the recovery stage is also important and includes consideration of many strategic issues, which need to be addressed, at both individual principal response agencies and at inter-agency level, during this phase. The recovery phase can typically include:

- assisting the physical and emotional recovery of victims;
- providing support and services to persons affected by the emergency;
- clean-up of damaged areas;
- restoration of infrastructure and public services;
- supporting the recovery of affected communities;
- planning and managing community events related to the emergency;
- investigations/inquiries into the events and/or the response;
- restoring normal functioning to the principal response agencies; and
- managing economic consequences.

A structured transition from response to recovery is critical for agencies, both collectively and individually. The recovery stage may be as demanding on the Local Authority resources and staff of the individual agencies as the emergency itself, as work may extend for a considerable time after the incident.

13.1.1 Supporting individuals and communities affected by the emergency

Following an emergency incident, assistance may be required by the victims of the emergency – not only those directly affected, but also family and friends, who may suffer bereavement or anxiety. A major emergency will have a serious affect on a community. The recovery phase should provide support and long term care for individuals involved in the incident and the communities affected by the incident. It is imperative that the Local Authority restores its critical service to a pre-emergency state as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The services and staff the local authority may be able to provide are based upon a wide range of skills and resources drawn from its day-to-day operations such as;

- Technical and engineering support
- Building control
- Road services
- Public health and environmental issues
- Provision of reception centres
- Re-housing and accommodation needs
- Transport
- Social services
- Psychosocial support
- Help lines
- Welfare and financial needs

There are specific requirements for each agency in the recovery process.

These requirements are:

Local Authority

- Clean-up
- Rebuilding the community and infrastructure
- Responding to community welfare needs (e.g. housing)
- Restoration of services

An Garda Síochána

- Identification of fatalities
- Preservation and gathering of evidence
- Investigation and criminal issues
- Dealing with survivors
- Dealing with relatives of the deceased and survivors
- Provision of an appropriate response to the immediate public need

Health Service Executive

- Provision of health care and support for casualties and survivors
- Support for relatives of casualties and survivors
- Responding to community welfare needs
- Restoration of health services

13.1.2 Managing of public appeals and external aid

There is a need for the co-ordination of emerging recovery issues, such as managing public appeals and external aid, from the earliest stages of the response phase. For this reason, the arrangements for co-ordination of response should continue to operate during the transition from response stage to recovery stage. At a point when the issues on the agendas of the Co-ordination Groups are largely recovery focussed, it may be appropriate to re-title the group as the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group. From the earliest stage, it may be appropriate also for the Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Group to appoint a Recovery Working Group to plan ahead.

It is recommended that Carlow County Council Crisis Management Team will continue to function until the issues arising in the response phase are more appropriately dealt with by the agency's normal management processes. Subsequently such aid will be dispensed through established support networks under the guidance of the Department of Social and Family Affairs or the Health Service Authority.

13.2 Clean-Up

In the aftermath of an emergency the clean-up operation has been assigned to the Local Authority. The removal of debris and contaminated waste is one of the principal concerns for Carlow County Council. In consultation with the EPA

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 to locations that will not affect communities.

13.2.1 Arrangements for clean-up of sites / removal of debris/decontamination of sites of emergency and the Council's role in this

Carlow County Council will ensure that the holder of waste material or polluting matter will be responsible for the clean-up of sites, the removal of debris and the decontamination of the site. Following an incident, the holder of waste material or polluting matter shall carry out a Risk Assessment in order to limit or prevent a risk to public health and safety and/or environmental pollution. The Risk Assessment shall identify the hazards created as a result of the incident (both direct and indirect), all potential receptors and the possible interconnecting pathways. It shall quantify the level of risk associated with the site (based on the significance of the hazard and the sensitivity of the identified receptors) and recommend remedial measures which shall be approved by Carlow County Council.

The selection of remedial measures is dependent on the results of the quantitative risk assessment that will be site specific. It should be noted that prior to the risk assessment it is assumed that the waste material or polluting matter shall be removed from the site unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative provides greater protection to public health and the environment. There are a number of Risk Assessment approaches and tools available. Agreement on the most appropriate response shall be sought from Carlow County Council at the outset.

13.3 Restoration of Infrastructure and Services. Specify how restoration of infrastructure and services is to be achieved, and the Council's role in this

The Local Authority must ensure that its critical services are restored as quickly as possible. Carlow County Council has a Business Continuity Plan prepared and this may be activated and revised as required to meet these demands.

13.3.1 Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the situation

At a point when the issues on the agendas of the Co-ordination Groups are largely recovery focussed, it may be appropriate to re-title the group as the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group. From the earliest stage, it may be appropriate also for the Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Group to appoint a Recovery Working Group to plan ahead. These groups will be responsible for the co-ordination of the recovery phase, managing resources and monitoring the situation until the issues arising are more appropriately dealt with by the normal management processes.

13.3.2 Procedure for liaison with utilities

The utility companies may need to be mobilised in the recovery phase in order to provide essential services such as gas, water, electrical supplies and communications facilities.

The ICT Section will also have a role to play in the recovery phase and will need to liaise with utilities in order to bring services back online, such as communication links etc.

13.3.3 How the order of priorities are to be determined

It is the responsibility of the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group together with the Recovery Working Group to prioritise events during the recovery phase.

It should be noted that staff welfare arrangements need to be given priority in the recovery stage of an incident, so that the needs of all staff, both emergency response teams and general staff (including management), are catered for. In addition, the needs of staff that are not directly involved in responding to the incident should also be considered. Those members of staff who continue in their normal work are supporting colleagues in the emergency response and may be taking on additional work in the process. They can be as critical to the organisation's response as those involved at the 'coalface'.

13.3.4 Protection measures against continuing hazards

Following an incident, the holder of waste material or polluting matter shall take all measures to reduce and eliminate any risks from hazards resulting from an incident. The Risk Assessment shall quantify the level of risk associated with the site and shall recommend remedial/protection measures which shall be approved by Carlow County Council. The selection of remedial measures is dependent on the results of the quantitative risk assessment that will be site specific. It should be noted that prior to the Risk Assessment it should be assumed that the waste material or polluting matter (i.e. the hazard) should be removed from the site unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative provides greater protection to public health and the environment.

Section 14 Review of the Major Emergency Plan

14.0 Sub-Sections on The Review of The Major Emergency Plan
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- 14.1 Internal Review Process**
- 14.2 How the MEP is to be reviewed and amended externally**
 - 14.2.1 Inter-agency Review Process at the Regional Steering Major Emergency Group**
 - 14.2.2 Review of the MEP by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government**
- 14.3 After every activation, the Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed and reported on**
 - 14.3.1 How the agency's performance of its functions will be reviewed and reported upon internally**
 - 14.3.2 How the co-ordination function will be reviewed and reported upon externally and jointly with other principal response agencies**

14.1 Internal Review Process

The Local Authority is committed to the continual review and improvement of this plan. As such this plan will remain an evolving document. In practice, this means that the Local Authority will actively monitor the content of the plan against contemporary good practice and issue important amendments as required. Major full revisions of the plan will be issued in full print version to the persons and organisations listed in [appendix E1](#). It is envisaged that minor revisions will be in electronic format and each update will be given an issue number with the latest issue being the active document. Each holder of a hard copy must ensure they update their issue accordingly.

Please Refer to section 1.8 of this document.

14.2 How the MEP is to be reviewed and amended externally

An internal review of the Major Emergency Plan will be undertaken by the Major Emergency Management Committee of Carlow County Council, the review will in general consist of, but not be limited to:

- Update the details of individuals that hold key positions in the Major Emergency plan
- Update the risk holders within the functional area of Carlow County Council.
- Update names and numbers of utility and private companies etc.
- Review the current risk assessments and update as required.
- Review other Major Emergency Plans and Exercise Reports if necessary
- Post the plan on the Carlow County Council Intranet and distribute updates to all agencies on the distribution list.
- Collate details of changes to the appendices, annexes and/or sub-plans and notify all persons / agencies on the distribution list.
- Coordinate the external monitoring and appraisal of the plan
- Maintain awareness of the plan within Carlow County Council
- Collaborate with the other Local Authorities and Agencies in the South East Region
- Conduct an annual appraisal of major emergency management including the plan and amend as required by any feedback

14.2.1 Inter-agency Review Process at the Regional Steering Major Emergency Group

Each principal response agency's Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed and validated by the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management and by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Each agency's appraisal should also be reviewed and validated by the relevant parent Department in the case of the Local Authorities and by the national headquarters, in consultation with the parent Department, in the case of Divisions of An Garda Síochána and Health Service Executive Areas, in accordance with the normal appraisal/reporting relationships within that sector. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to the principal response agency for appropriate action. In cases of disagreement between a principal response agency and a Regional Steering Group, the National Steering Group should be consulted and should decide on the issue.

The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will also be reviewed and validated by the National Steering Group. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management for appropriate action.

14.2.2 Review of the MEP by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

In addition to Carlow County Council's Major Emergency Plan being reviewed locally and regionally, it must also be reviewed and validated by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to Carlow County Council for appropriate action.

14.3 After every activation, the Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed and reported upon

Once the Major Emergency Plan has been activated and subsequently has been stood down, each of the services and agencies involved in the incident will hold a series of operational hot-debriefs. Initially these will be confined to each particular service, but later a multi-agency cold-debrief will be held (Multi-agency debriefs should consider the contribution provided by other, non-emergency service) and lessons learned will be incorporated into this Plan and other service manuals, as appropriate.

14.3.1 How the agency's performance of its functions will be reviewed and reported upon internally

In addition to the review process outlined in the sections above, on a local, regional and national level, the Major Emergency Plan for Carlow County Council and the performance of the Local Authority as a principal response agency will also be reviewed following or subsequent to a major incident within the county/ region or even nationally, when there is learning to be gained. Should any new risks become apparent in County Carlow, the plan will be amended to reflect this.

14.3.2 How the co-ordination function will be reviewed and reported upon externally and jointly with other principal response agencies

Multi-agency debriefs should consider the contribution provided by not only each other but also other, non-emergency service agencies. This is notwithstanding the potential conflict of interest that may result in later investigations. This aspect should be considered when inviting agencies other than emergency services to the 'debrief'.

Multi-agency reviews must also be conducted on an annual basis between the principal response agencies on both a local and regional level basis. This will include reviewing and reporting on the co-ordination function of the agencies.

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