****

**Cavan County Council**

**Major Emergency Plan**

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| --- | --- |
| **Title:** | Cavan County Council  Major Emergency Plan |
| **Version:** | 3.0 |
| **Date:** | March 2016 |
| **Status:** | Approved for Use |
| **Prepared by:** | Major Emergency Development Committee |
| **Approved by:** | Chief Executive |

**TO ACTIVATE THIS PLAN**

**Contact East Regional Control**

**Centre (Fire Service)**

**Using the following Confidential Numbers**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **East Regional Fire Service Control Centre** | **Telephone Number** | **Back up Number** | **Fax Number** | **e-mail** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

If these numbers are not answered use (and request the Fire Service) as an alternative

The authorised officer should Notify the Fire Service East Regional Control Centre of the Declaration of the Major Emergency using the following message 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 Cavan County Council Major Emergency Plan.**

After the declaration is made the authorised officer should 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 types of Casualties**

**E Emergency services present and required**

***Further information on the procedure for activating the plan is contained in Appendix 1.***

Where the initial declaration of the Major Emergency is made by the Local Authority, the Regional Fire Service Controller on duty, as part of pre-set actions, will notify the other two PRAs of the declaration and provide information as available, using the following numbers:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ambulance Control** | **Telephone Number** | **Back up Number** | **Fax Number** | **e-mail** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Garda Div. H.Q. at** | **Telephone Number** | **Back up Number** | **Fax Number** | **e-mail** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Where the East Regional Control Centre receives notification of a Major Emergency from another PRA, the Regional Fire Service Controller on duty, as part of pre-set actions, will confirm to the other two Principal Response Agencies involved that the Local Authority Major Emergency Plan has been activated.

*(Note A version of these pages is placed inside the front cover of the Major Emergency Plan of each PRA. As a result, each PRA will make and receive two calls in relation to any Major Emergency Declaration. The purpose of this crosscheck is to confirm that relevant PRAs are aware that a Major Emergency has been declared. It also ensures that the notification/ confirmation has come from an authorised officer.)*

Document Control

|  |  |  |  |
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| Status: | Approved for Use | | |
| Final Approval: | Chief Executive: Tommy Ryan | | |

**Record of Issues and Amendments**

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**Section 1**

Introduction to the Plan

1. **Foreword**

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that Cavan County Council responds in an efficient and effective manner to any major emergency which may occur within its operational area. The organisation recognises the responsibilities of all its sections in delivering a structured and coherent approach to emergency management including:

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

In order to achieve this we must be in a position to respond quickly as the situation requires, being able to restore order and normality as best possible and to provide leadership and promote confidence both within the organisation and the community we serve. As such we must also be capable of learning from our experiences and acknowledging our success and our failures.

It is also important to note the role of the community in response to an emergency incident. Cavan County Council are to the fore in working 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.



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**Tommy Ryan**

Chief Executive

Cavan County Council

1. **Background**

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government decision and is consistent with ‘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 to an enhanced level of preparedness via the new emergency management process. The purpose of this plan is to put in place arrangements that will enable the three principle 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. **Objectives of the Major Emergency Plan**

The objectives of the Major Emergency Plan are as follows:

* Protection and Care of the public at times of vulnerability
* Clear leadership in a time of crisis
* Early and appropriate response
* Efficient, co-ordinated operations
* Realistic and rationale approach capable of being delivered
* Transparent systems, with accountability
* Harnessing Community Spirit
* The ethos of self protection
* Maintenance of essential services
* Safe working

1. **Scope of the Major Emergency Plan**

The Scope of the Major Emergency Plan is such that the plan provides for a co-ordinated response to major emergencies arising, for example, from fires, explosions, gas releases, transportation accidents, incidents involving dangerous substances, flooding, landslides, environmental contamination etc. that are beyond the normal capabilities of the Fire Service, Gardai or the HSE.

The framework defines a Major Emergency 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.

1. **Relationship / interoperability of MEP with other Emergency Plans**

This plan provides for a co-ordinated response to major emergencies for Cavan County Council services and the procedures and protocols for co-ordination with the other principle response agencies operating within the county boundary. An Garda Síochána and the HSE have made similar arrangements within their own organisations.

This document is the Local Authority element of the Major Emergency Plan. The Major Emergency Plan is the combined co-ordinated plans of the local authority, Health Services Executive and An Garda Síochána in the area where the emergency occurs. In this instance the area concerned is County Cavan.

There are also procedures detailed for dealing with major emergencies which require a regional response arising within the North East Regional area as well as links to plans dealing with National Major Emergencies. Refer to Section 9 for details regarding Regional Level Co-ordination and Section 10 for details regarding links to National Emergency Plans respectively.

1. **Language / Terminology of the Plan**

The language and terminology used in this plan is in compliance with that used in the Framework for Major Emergency Management 2006. A Glossary of Terms has been included in the appendices to this document.

1. **Distribution of the Plan**

A master copy of the plan is to be maintained by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Emergency Planning, who is the designated official responsible for administrative arrangements relating to the emergency plan.

A copy of the plan shall be distributed to the individuals and agencies as indicated in Appendix 16 – MEP Distribution List

Where additional or replacement copies of this plan are required a request in writing shall be made to the Chief Fire Officer, Cavan County Fire Service, Cavan Fire Station, Drumnavanagh, Cavan, Co. Cavan.

1. **Status and Review of the Plan**

The original version of this plan came into effect from 30/09/2008 replacing the Draft Cavan County Council Major Emergency Plan of December 2006.

This current version will be active from the date issued. Periodic reviews and the updating of this plan will be undertaken as indicated in Section 14 of this plan.

Comments and/or amendments on this document should be forwarded to:

Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Major Emergency Management,

Cavan County Fire Service HQ,

Drumnavanagh,

Cavan,

Co. Cavan

Or via email: [fireoff@cavancoco.ie](mailto:fireoff@cavancoco.ie)

1. **Public Access to the Major Emergency Plan**

Relevant sections of the plan (sections 1 – 14) will be available to the public on the council’s website [www.cavancoco.ie](http://www.cavancoco.ie) or at the following location for viewing during Council office hours:

* Cavan Fire Station, Drumnavanagh, Cavan, Co. Cavan;

Section 2

Cavan County Council and its Functional Area

* 1. **Role of Cavan County Council**

This plan applies to the functional area of Cavan County Council. In the event of a major emergency the role Cavan County Council is to ensure life safety by providing emergency services in the form of the Fire service and Civil Defence and appropriate assistance from the other services provided by the local authority. Cavan 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 emergency services, support and care for the local and wider community, use Local Authority resources to mitigate the effects of the emergency and co-ordination of the voluntary organisations. In the ‘recovery’ phase the local authority will play a role in the rehabilitation of the community and the restoration of the environment.

The **functions of the Local Authority** in response to a major emergency consists of the following:

* Declaration of a major emergency and notification of the other two principle response agencies;
* Mobilisation of predetermined resources and activating predetermined procedures in accordance with Cavan County Council Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure
* Acting as a lead agency where this is determined in accordance with Appendix 3 of the framework and undertaking the specified co-ordination function;
  + Protection and rescue of persons and property
  + Controlling and/or extinguishing fires
  + Dealing with hazardous material incidents including:
    - Identification, containment, neutralisation and clearance of chemical spills and emissions ;
    - Decontamination (other than clinical decontamination) on-site of persons affected (under medical supervision where necessary);
* Advising on protection of persons threatened by sheltering or evacuation;
* Arranging/overseeing clean-up of affected areas;
* Limiting damage to infrastructure and property;
* Provision of access/transport to/from the site of the emergency;
* Provision of additional lighting required, beyond what the principal emergency services normally carry;
* Assisting An Garda Síochána to recover bodies, when requested;
* Support for An Garda Síochána forensic work;
* Support for the Coroner’s role, including provision of temporary mortuary facilities;
* Accommodation and welfare of evacuees and persons displaced by the emergency (Welfare in this case is intended to mean food, bedding, sanitary and washing facilities);
* Provision of food, rest and sanitary facilities as appropriate for personnel involved in the response to the emergency;
* Engaging any specialist contractors required to assist with emergency operations;
* Exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site;
* Liaison with utilities regarding restoration/maintenance/or enhancing services provided to the site or to persons affected;
* Site clearance, demolition, clear-up operations, removal and disposal of debris (This should be done after consultation with An Garda Síochána to avoid the possible destruction of evidence);
* Monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a “National Emergency”, and coordinating/undertaking any countermeasures in its functional area which are required/ recommended by an appropriate national body (The Local Authority should co-ordinate local aspects of National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents);
* Any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;
* Any function which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform; and,
* Maintaining essential Local Authority services (e.g. roads availability, fire and emergency operations cover, public water supply, waste water treatment, waste disposal) during the major emergency.

Cavan County Council is required to respond to these functions with respect to a major emergency through utilisation of its range of services as appropriate and necessary.

* 1. **Boundaries & Characteristics of the Area**

Cavan is an inland county in the Province of Ulster, covering an area of 189,060 hectares (467,167 acres). The county is landlocked bordering Fermanagh, Monaghan, Meath, Westmeath, Longford and Leitrim. The geography of the county is characterised by drumlin countryside dotted with many lakes and small hills. The north-west area of the county is particularly sparsely populated and mountainous. The county has several areas of highly scenic landscape, and overall has a pleasing pastoral environment. The towns and villages of the county are distinctive centres which provide for various employment, service and social needs.

The rivers and lakes of the county, including Lough Oughter, are of particular scenic and amenity value. They offer a significant resource in terms of angling for both overseas and domestic visitors. Other attractions in Cavan include the Shannon-Erne Waterway, the forest parks, the rich legacy of historic and archaeological remains and numerous sports and leisure facilities.

The period between 2006 and 2011 saw strong population growth within the county once again with the population rising from 64,003 to 73,183. This was a 14.3% increase in the population of the county and the second fastest growing county population in percentage terms. This follows on from the previous strong populaton growth in the county between 2002 and 2006. Overall the population of the county has expanded 29.4% between 2002 and 2011.

The areas within the county that displayed the strongest percentage increases centred on the areas of Virginia, Ballyjamesduff, Cavan, Ballyconnell and Belturbet.

* 1. **Partner Principle Response Agencies**

The other Principle Response Agencies (PRA) responsible for emergency services in this area are:-

* + - 1. Cavan/Monaghan Division of An Garda Síochána\*
      2. Health Service Executive – North Eastern Area

\*Relevant Garda Districts are Cavan and Bailieborough Districts.

The roles of these agencies in response to a major emergency are outlined in Appendix 7 – Functions of the Principle Response Agencies

* 1. **Major Emergency Management Regions**

There are eight regions for Major Emergency Management purposes and Cavan forms part of the North East Region along with Counties Louth, Meath and Monaghan. However Counties Cavan, Monaghan and Louth are also situated along the border with Northern Ireland and response to major emergencies may also require a degree of cross-border facilitation.

The Population in the other counties adjacent to Cavan in 2011 were:

* + - Monaghan 60,495 (8.0% increase)
    - Meath 184,034 (13.0% increase)
    - Westmeath 85,961 (8.3% increase)
    - Leitrim 31,778 (9.8% increase)
    - Longford 38,970 (13.3% increase)
    - Fermanagh 57,527 (NI Census 2001)

Louth is also in the North East Major Emergency Management Region along with Cavan, Monaghan and Meath. Louth had a population of 122,808 (10.4% increase).



Where mutual aid is required in order to deal with a major emergency incident the arrangements provided within the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination should be followed. Please refer to Sections 4.5 and 6.3.4.1

Section 3

Risk Assessment for the Area

* 1. **History of Major Emergency Events in Cavan**

Major emergencies by their very nature and few and far between. The last occasion on which the Major emergency Plan was activated was in 2001 following an explosion at an industrial facility.

In more historical terms other incidents such as the Belturbet Car Bomb (December 1972) and the Poor Clares Convent fire in Cavan Town (February 1943) were two other examples of major emergencies. With regard to the fire at the Poor Clares Convent it ranks as one of the most significant fires in the history of the State along with the Stardust disaster. It was the cause of the deaths of 35 children and 1 adult and led to the establishment of an Interdepartmental Review of the Fire Services nationally, by the Government of the day.

* 1. **General and specific risks**
     1. **Hazard Identification**

This major emergency plan has been developed taking into consideration the hazards present within the operational area of Cavan County Council. These hazards include but are not limited to severe weather (e.g. Storms, Heavy Snow etc.), landslide, forest fire, flooding, transportation accidents, incidents involving hazardous materials, industrial accidents (e.g. fire, gas/fluid emissions, explosions), fire involving a large place of assembly/residential institution, gas explosions, building collapse, terrorism and CBRN incidents, pollution/contamination of the public water supply, major crowd safety, epidemics/pandemics and animal disease (e.g. foot and mouth or avian flu).

* + 1. **Risk Assessment**

All the hazards above have been identified as part of a risk assessment for the county conducted in accordance with the National Steering Group guidance document “A Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management” and have been assessed in terms of the potential to cause a major emergency incident. Risk assessment documentation is in place at local and regional levels as a support to the major emergency management process. Appropriate planning and preparedness efforts have been put in place to allow the Local Authority to respond in an appropriate and proportionate manner should such an event occur.

* 1. **Exemplars for Preparedness**

The risk assessment documentation mentioned previously has been utilised as a basis for exemplars of incidents for which the Local Authority has established preparedness measures.

The following have been selected as exemplars on which preparedness for Cavan County Council has been based:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Severe Weather (Storm, Heavy Snow) 2. Flooding 3. Forest Fire 4. Multiple Road Traffic Collision involving Hazmat 5. Multiple Road Traffic Collision involving bus/ large passenger vehicle 6. Aviation 7. Industrial Accident | 1. Building incident (fire, building collapse, gas explosion) 2. Contamination of water supply 3. Pollution/Contamination 4. Civil disorder / Major Crowd Safety 5. Terrorism CBRN 6. Animal Disease 7. Pandemic Disease |

At the regional level the principle response agencies consolidated their individual exemplars into the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Severe Weather 2. Transportation Incident 3. Industrial Accident/Seveso/Hazmat 4. Place of Assembly Mass Casualty/Crowd Incident | 1. Public Residential Facaility – Hospital/Nursing Home 2. Public Health 3. Loss of Utilities 4. Terrorist CBRN |

* 1. **Risk Management/Risk Mitigation & 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 can not be eliminated.

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

The risk assessment comprises four stages:

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 can not be eliminated.

Cavan County Council is committed to working with local community, social, business and enterprise groups to ensure that all appropriate risk mitigation and reduction strategies are applied as part of an overall risk management strategy in conjunction with the other principle response agencies within the area.

**Fig3.1: Schematic Risk Assessment Process**

* 1. **Site/Event Specific Emergency Plans**

At present according to the HSA there are no registered sites within the county boundary that store/handle sufficient quantities of hazardous materials to constitute classification as a Seveso site.

As such there are no site specific plans currently in place within the county.

Section 4

Resources for Emergency Response

* 1. **Cavan Local Authority Structure**

Cavan County Council is governed by the Local Government Acts, the most recent of which being the Local Government Reform Act 2014. Each section of the council reports to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is responsible for supervising and implementing the policies adopted by Cavan County Council.

The Local Authority operates by way of four directorates which oversee the day to day operation of the various services provided by the Local Authority. The Management Structure of Cavan County Council is set out on the following page.

Each section of the county council may be called upon to act in the event of a Major Emergency.

Cavan County Council - Management Structure

* 1. **Special staffing arrangements during a Major Emergency**

Cavan County Council staff required to carry out functions in relation to a Major Emergency will be mobilised in accordance with pre-determined procedures outlined in Appendix 2 – Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure. Section Action plans are provided to indicate relevant actions to be taken by staff in the event of a major emergency incident.

* 1. **Matching Resources to Major Emergency Management Functions**

Cavan County Council has identified and formally nominated competent individuals and alternates to the key roles to enable the agency to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in this 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.

In addition Appendix 6 – Mobilising External Resources has a listing of various resources that may be called upon to assist at a major emergency incident.

* 1. **Other Organisations/Agencies that may be mobilised to assist**

Depending on the circumstances of the Major Emergency it may be necessary to mobilise additional resources to assist the Principal Response Agencies. These organisations/agencies may include but are not limited to:

* Government Departments
* The Defence Forces
* The Civil Defence
* The Irish Red Cross
* Voluntary Emergency Services sector
* The Community affected
* Utilities (ESB, Eircom etc.)
* Semi-State Bodies
* Private Sector

Contact details for the various organisations/agencies are detailed in the Appendices to this Plan.

* 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.

In the event that mutual aid from neighbouring Local Authorities is required the On-Site Co-ordinator shall request the provision of mutual aid.

Where the mutual aid is required from a neighbouring Local Authority then the Local Authority representative on the Local Co-ordination Group in conjunction with the Local Authority Crisis Management Team will make the necessary arrangements for the provision of aid from neighbouring Local Authorities.

* 1. **Regional Level Response**

Depending on the scale of the Major Emergency it may be necessary to escalate the level of response from a Local one to that of a Regional Level Response. This is a decision for the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group.

Depending on the circumstances, the goal of regional co-ordination may be achieved by using a single Co-ordination Centre The method of operation of a Regional Co-ordination Centre will be similar to that of the Local Co-ordination Centre.

* 1. **National/International Assistance**

The scale, complexity or likely duration of some emergencies may be such that significant assistance is required from neighbouring or other regions of the country, or from outside the state.

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

The Local/Regional Co-ordination Group should identify 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, from Northern Ireland, the rest of the United Kingdom or from other EU member states.

*Regional Co-ordination Groups needing assistance from neighbouring regions, including border regions needing assistance from Northern Ireland, should make the request directly (on a mutual aid basis).*

A 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 Local or Regional Coordination Group to the National Liaison Officer at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.*

Section 5

Preparedness for Major Emergency Response

* 1. **Business Planning Process**

The development of the Cavan County Council Major Emergency plan is part of an emergency management programme development 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 cannot stand alone but must be incorporated into the Council’s business planning and business continuity management.

* 1. **Responsibility for leading Preparedness**
     1. **Internal**

Within the Cavan County Council organisation it is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to ensure the overall preparedness of the Local Authority in response to a major emergency. Under the structure of Cavan County Council the supervision of the activities to achieve this have been delegated to the Director of Services for Infrastructure, Emergency Services, Fire and Housing.

* + 1. **Inter-agency**

In respect of the inter-agency preparedness it is the responsibility of the North East Regional Steering and Working Groups to ensure the overall preparedness in response to a major emergency.

The Chief Executive is the Cavan County Council representative on the Regional Steering Group.

The Director of Services for Infrastructure, Emergency Services, Fire and Housing and the Chief Fire Officer are the Cavan County Council representatives on the Regional Working Group.

* 1. **Major Emergency Development Programme**

A Major Emergency Management Committee (MEMC) has been established in Cavan County Council, comprising of the Heads of each Department. Progress on the Major Emergency Development Programme will be reviewed regularly at Cavan County Council Management Team meetings and a formal arrangement will be put in place for the MEMC to report to the Management Team.

* 1. **Nominations for Key Roles**

As part of the major emergency development programme Cavan County Council personnel have been identified and nominated for the various key roles provided within the 2006 Framework for Major Emergency Management. In addition a number of alternates have been identified in the absence of the nominated staff. Arrangements for the mobilisation of nominated personnel (or their alternates) in the event of a major emergency are provided in Appendix 2 – Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure.

* 1. **Support Teams for Key Roles**

The Crisis Management Team will provide overall support to the Local Authority representative on the Local Co-ordination Group and Controller of Operations. In support of this the appropriate sections of the Local Authority have developed an Action Plan to which the CMT can refer to in order to mobilise the appropriate staff to a given incident. The Action Plans are included in Appendix 2 - Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure.

* 1. **Staff Development Programme**

The provisions of the Framework and the tasks arising from it involve a significant level of development activity, both within Cavan County Council and jointly with our regional partners.

Cavan County Council shall carry out a staff development programme to raise awareness, educate individuals on their roles and the roles of others and promote co-ordination and cooperation. This will involve training and exercises and will raise the level of preparedness, so that in a major emergency the Local Authority 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 PRA’s through continued training and inter-agency exercises.

* 1. **Training**

The staff nominated for the Key Roles will undergo training for the role prior to their appointment. This training will be specifically to develop their skills and abilities with regard to their individual roles for Major Emergency Management.

* 1. **Internal Exercise Programme**

As part of Cavan County Council’s commitment to ensuring preparedness for a major emergency response the local authority will undertake to conduct internal exercises (subject to the availability of staff and resources) to raise awareness, educate individuals on their roles and the roles of others and promote coordination and cooperation, as well as validating plans, systems and procedures. The exercise programme will follow the guidelines issued by the MEM Project Team of the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management.

* 1. **Joint/Inter-agency Training & Exercises**

Cavan County Council shall participate in joint / inter-agency training and exercise programmes with its partner agencies in the North East Region co-ordinated by the North East Regional Working Group.

Exercises conducted on a joint/inter-agency basis shall also be based on the guidance provided in “A Guide to Planning and Staging Exercises” approved by the National Steering Group. As with the internal exercise programme appropriate documentation of the exercises will be provided to aid the recording of the exercise programme.

* 1. **Allocation of Resources for Major Emergency Management**

Cavan County Council has included major emergency management within its annual budget in order to underpin the provision of major emergency management arrangements.

* 1. **Authorisation for Procurement and Use of Resources**

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’.

The decision making mandates of the Local Authority Controller of Operations, On-Site Co-ordinator, Chair of Local Co-ordination Group and Local Co-ordination Group outline the authorisation for the procurement and use of resources in the event of a declared major emergency.

* 1. **Annual Appraisal of Preparedness**

An annual appraisal of preparedness for major emergency management within Cavan County Council will be conducted. Completed appraisals shall be forwarded to the North East Regional Steering Group and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Section 6

The Command, Control and Co-ordination System

* 1. **Command Arrangements**

Where command arrangements exist within an agency or service the head of that agency or service shall exercise operational command over their own service subject to the overall control and direction of the Controller of Operations of the Principal Response Agency that requests their mobilisation to the incident.

* 1. **Control Arrangements**
     1. **Controller of Operations**

Control of local authority services (i.e. Local Authority Controller of Operations) at the site of the emergency shall be exercised by a Director of Services or designated alternate.

* + 1. **Designation of Controller of Operations**

The Chief Executive or alternate shall designate the person to be Controller of Operations and may order the transfer of this function from one person to another.

* + 1. **Transfer of Control**

The transfer of the control function from an existing Controller of Operations to a new Controller of Operations shall be accompanied by a formal statement to the EAST Regional Control Centre (ERCC) from both the existing Controller of Operations and the Officer to whom the function is to be transferred e.g.

This is ………… (name, rank and service)…………..

I hereby transfer the functions and responsibilities of Local Authority Controller of Operations to ……… (name, rank and service)………

The time is …………… dated this day the …(*Day)*… of (*Month*, *Year)*

This is ………… (name, rank and service)…………..

I hereby accept the functions and responsibilities of Local Authority Controller of Operations at ……… (specify location of Incident)………

The time is …………… dated this day the …(*Day)*… of (*Month*, *Year)*

The time of transfer shall be logged by both the person relinquishing control and the person assuming control within the Controller of Operations Incident Log. Refer to Appendix 2 - Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure for ERCC contact details.

* + 1. **Arrangements pending arrival of Controller of Operations**

Pending the arrival of the Controller of Operations at the site of the emergency, his functions shall be exercised:

1. Where the fire brigade has responded, by the senior officer present, or
2. Where the fire brigade has not responded but some other senior officer of a service has responded, by the senior officer of that service present.
   * 1. **Incidents along Boundaries**

In certain situations e.g. where the emergency affects a large area or occurs near the borders of the local authority there may be a response from multiple units of different local authorities.

Where the issue of which responding officer should assume the role of local authority Controller of Operations cannot be resolved quickly 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.

* + 1. **Absence of Local Authority Response**

In the absence of any local authority response, the senior Garda present will exercise certain local authority functions as outlined in Section 2.1

Note: This follows the logic of Section 27 of the Fire Services Act, 1981.

* + 1. **Mandate of the Local Authority Controller of Operations**

The Mandate of the Local Authority Controller of Operations has been detailed in the Action Plan for the Controller of Operations which is provided in Appendix 2 – Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure.

* + 1. **On-Site Co-ordinator**

The Controller of Operations of the Lead Agency will be the On-Site Co-ordinator. Refer to Section 7.6 and Appendix 8 - Pre-nominated Lead Agencies for Different Categories of Major Emergency regarding the determination of the Lead Agency.

The Mandate of the On-Site Co-ordinator has been outlined in the Action Plan for the Local Authority Controller of Operations provided in Appendix 2 – Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure.

* + 1. **On-Site Co-ordination Group**

**The Chair of the On-Site Co-ordination Group will be the On-Site Co-ordinator.**

In addition to this person the Group should comprise the Controllers of Operations of the other two Agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Officer, an Action Management Officer (where considered appropriate), representatives of other agencies and specialists as appropriate.

While the On-Site Co-ordinator is empowered to make decisions, these 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.

* + 1. **Danger Area**

Where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel, over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations the On-Site Co-ordination Group may decide to declare a **“Danger Area”** and may designate an officer, appropriate for the circumstances (e.g. a senior fire officer at the site in a case involving hazardous materials) to define the boundaries of, and to control access to, the Danger Area.

When the Defence Forces deploy an Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) team in Aid to the Civil Power, the Officer in Charge of the team, upon arrival at the scene, will assume responsibility for the EOD task and will inform the On-Site Co-ordinator of the boundaries of the Danger Area, and advise on Cordon(s).

The activities of all agencies within the “Danger Area” shall be under the overall control and direction of the appointed officer.

Please refer to Section 7.9 regarding Site Management Arrangements and Section 7.16.4 for details of evacuation of Danger Area.

* + 1. **Local Co-ordination Group**

The Local Co-ordination Group consists of a group of senior representatives from the three principal response agencies (An Garda Síochána, HSE and Local Authority) whose function is to facilitate strategic level co-ordination, make policy decisions, liaise with regional/national level coordination centres, if appropriate, and facilitate the distribution of information to the media and the public.

The representative of the lead agency will chair the Local Co-ordination Group and will exercise the mandates associated with this position.

The *Mandate of the Designated Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group* and the *Mandate of the Local Co-ordination Group* once it has been activated as well as an initial action plan for the Local Authority representative have been outlined in Appendix 3 –Local Co-ordination Group Mobilisation Procedure.

The local authority representative will be supported in carrying out their functions by the Local Authority Crisis Management Team.

Please refer to Section 6.3.3 regarding the arrangements for the Local Co-ordination Centre.

* + 1. **Crisis Management Team**

The Crisis Management Team is a strategic level management group within Cavan County Council, 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 head quarters, 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 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 Local Authority Crisis Management Team provides support to the Cavan County Council representative at the Local Co-ordination Group, supports our own Controller of Operations on site and maintains the Local Authority’s normal day-to-day services that the community requires.

The mobilisation procedure and composition of the Crisis Management Team is outlined in Appendix 2 – Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure under Crisis Management Team Action Plan.

The Crisis Management Team is supported by the appropriate staff members listed in the Action Plan.

* + 1. **Control of external organisations/agencies mobilised to assist**

At the site of an emergency, Cavan County Council will exercise control over not only its own services but any additional services (other than the principle response agencies) which the Local Authority mobilises to the site.

* + 1. **Support Arrangements for the Control Function**

The Local Authority functions with regard to Controller of Operations, Chair of Local Co-ordination Group and other various positions identified will be supported by the appropriate back up staff indicated in the relevant mobilisation procedures.

* 1. **Co-ordination Arrangements** 
     1. **Lead Agency**

Responsibility and mandate for the co-ordination function belongs specifically to one of the three principal response agencies. This is determined by the nature of the incident under the concept of the Lead Agency. Please refer to Section 7.6 and Appendix 8 - Pre-nominated Lead Agencies for Different Categories of Major Emergency of this plan with regard to the determination of the Lead Agency.

* + 1. **On-Site Co-ordination**

The On-Site Co-ordination Group will comprise representatives of the three principal response agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer, an Action Management Officer (where considered appropriate), and others as considered appropriate. Arrangements are provided to mobilise staff to the incident to provide personnel to carry out the relevant roles within the On-Site Co-ordination group.

The Controller of Operations of the Lead Agency will be the On-Site Co-ordinator and shall chair the On-Site Co-ordination Group.

The On-Site Co-ordinator shall determine the facility to use as an On-site Co-ordination Centre. It may be appropriate depending on the circumstances to utilise a tent or other temporary structure or an appropriate space/building adjacent to the site.

* + 1. **Local/Regional Co-ordination Centre**

The local co-ordination centres within the North East region are located at:

* Cavan County Council Offices, The Courthouse, Cavan, Co. Cavan, H12 R6V2
* Monaghan Fire Station, Annahagh, Co. Monaghan, H18 YW81.
* Louth County Hall, Dundalk, Co. Louth, A91 KFW6.
* Meath County Hall, Navan, Co. Meath, C15 A279.

In the event of a Major Emergency at the local level the Courthouse Cavan shall serve as the Local Co-ordination Centre.

When a major emergency has been declared and the lead agency determined, the relevant officers of the lead agency should implement a Local Co-ordination Group Mobilisation Procedure.

A representative of the lead agency will chair the Local Co-ordination Group and will exercise the mandates associated with this position. Refer to Appendix 3 – Local Co-ordination Group Mobilisation Procedure regarding the Mandates of the Local Co-ordination Group and its Chair.

The Local Co-ordination Group will comprise representatives of the three principal response agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer, an Action Management Officer (where considered appropriate), representatives of other agencies and specialists as appropriate.

The representatives on the Local Co-Ordination Group from the three principal response agencies are:-

Chief Executive (or alternate) Cavan County Council

Area Manager (or alternate) HSE-North East

The Garda Chief Superintendent (or alternate) Cavan/Monaghan Division

Arrangements are provided to mobilise staff to the Local Co-ordination Centre to provide personnel to carry out the support functions for the Local Co-ordination Group.

In the event of a Major Emergency on a regional level the location of the Regional Co-ordination Centre 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.

Any of the local coordination centres within the region may serve as the Regional Co-ordination Centre.

The method of operation of a Regional Co-ordination Centre will be similar to the provisions of the Local Co-ordination Centre.

* + 1. **Co-ordination Arrangements for other circumstances**
       1. **Mutual Aid and regional level co-ordination**

During a major emergency, Cavan County Council should inform the Local/Regional Co-ordination Centre of any unilateral activation of arrangements with services in Northern Ireland.

Where the Local/Regional Co-ordination Group determines that additional assistance, above that arranged by the individual services, should be sought or that information on a situation should be made available to authorities in Northern Ireland, the request/information should be transmitted by An Garda Síochána to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, in accordance with internal code procedures of An Garda Síochána.

Where appropriate, representatives of the equivalent of the principal response agencies in Northern Ireland should be invited to participate in Local/Regional Co-ordination Groups.

* + - 1. **Incidents occurring on boundary of Cavan County Council’s Functional Area**

Refer to Section 6.2.5 regarding the control of incidents that occur on the boundary of the Local Authority Functional Area. Where Cavan County Council is the Lead Agency it shall exercise the co-ordination function.

* + - 1. **Multi-site or Wide Area emergencies**

Not all emergencies are site specific. In the event of an incident occurring over a wide area or multi site, the Controller of Operations may designate a staff member to provide support to their function in line with the Fire Service concept of Sectorisation utilized in the Fire Service Incident Command System. (Sectorisation, e.g., division of the incident ground into a series of sectors, with sector commanders appointed to manage activities within each sector.) There may be the need to set up multiple On-Site Co-ordination Centres that feed into a single Local Co-ordination Group.

* + - 1. **Links to National Emergency Plans**

Section 10 details the links to National Emergency Plans.

The arrangements for linking the local response to a major emergency with national level co-ordination arise from what might be termed a "bottom up" situation.

Where one of the National Emergency Plans, (i.e. National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents, Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Emergency Plan or Animal Health Plan) is activated, a “topdown” connection may be put in place, i.e. the Regional and Local Co-ordination Centres are requested to become operational by the lead Department. The configuration of Regional and Local Co-ordination Centres to be activated under this provision should be determined in light of the circumstances warranting the activation.



*Linking Major Emergency Plans with National & Other Plans*

The relationships between different levels of Command, Control and Co-ordination, and the related Information Flows, are illustrated in the Co-ordination Schematic in Section 6.3.5.

* + - 1. **Links with National Government**

In every situation where a Major Emergency is declared, the Local Authority shall inform the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government of the declaration, as part of the mobilisation procedure.

The Department, in its role as a member of the National Steering Group, should consult and agree with the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Health, on the basis of available information, which Government Department will be designated as lead Department, in keeping with the Department of Defence’s Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance.

Where the determination is that the lead Department is a Government Department other than one of the members of the National Steering Group, the chair of the National Steering Group (or a person acting on his/her behalf) should inform both the lead Department and the lead agency of the designation. Where there is difficulty in designating a lead Department in accordance with these arrangements, the Department of the Taoiseach should be contacted by the chair of the National Steering Group and that Department will determine the matter.

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

The Local Co-ordination Centre should brief the lead Department on the situation using the generic information management system. Issues arising should be developed as necessary between the Local Co-ordination Group and the lead Government Department.

Where appropriate, the Government Press Secretary, in conjunction with the press office of the lead Department, will co-ordinate communications with the public/media at national level.

The lead Department should provide information on the emergency to other Government Departments that may have a support role, as outlined in the Department of Defence’s Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance. The lead Department should decide if Inter- Departmental co-ordination facilities are to be activated, typically an Inter-Departmental Emergency Response Co-ordination Group, which may meet at the National Emergency Co-ordination Centre, or other appropriate facility.

It is also the responsibility of the lead Department, in association with the Department of the Taoiseach, to give effect to the provisions of a Government Decision relating to arrangements for Cabinet and Cabinet Committees, where the response to certain emergencies warrants political direction.

* + 1. Co-ordination Schematic

The relationships between different levels of Command, Control and Co-ordination, and the related Information Flows, are illustrated in the Co-ordination Schematic below.



Schematic Diagram Illustrating On-Site, Local, Regional and National Co-ordination

Note: For clarity not all information flows are shown on this diagram



Schematic of the main communication flows to / from the Local Co-ordination Centre

Section 7

The Common Elements of Response

* 1. Declaring a Major Emergency

The Major Emergency Plan should be activated by whichever of the following agencies first become aware of the Major Emergency:

* Local Authority
* Gardai
* Health Service Executive

Local Authority Activation Procedures

**The Local Authority Officers authorised to activate the Cavan County Council Major Emergency Plan are the Cavan Chief Executive, Directors of Services, Chief Fire Officer and Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officers.**

The officer activating the Plan is to do so by means of the procedure outlined in Appendix 1 – Procedure to be taken by Local Authority Officer declaring a Major Emergency.

The officer activating the Plan must do so by means of the following declaratory message:

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 Cavan County Council Major Emergency Plan.

Once this declaration has been made the officer is to 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 types of Casualties

E Emergency Services present and **required.**

When reporting a major emergency or notifying local authority services and other agencies that the plan is being activated all available, essential and relevant information should be provided.

* 1. Initial Mobilisation

The initial mobilisation of Cavan County Council’s resources will be facilitated through the East Region Control Centre. The initial response to the activation of the major emergency plan is the attendance of 4 No. Fire Service Water Tenders and the Incident Command Vehicle in conjunction with the notification of the Council’s appropriate senior management personnel. The initial mobilisation procedure is detailed in Appendix 2-Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure of the Plan.

* 1. Command, Control and Communication Centres

The East Region Control Centre located at Dublin Fire Brigade HQ in Townsend Street, Dublin 2 shall be the control centre to mobilise, support and monitor the Fire Service and other Services requested/required by the Local Authority. The ERCC shall be the control centre to notify the appropriate personnel in response to the activation of the major emergency plan.

* 1. Co-ordination Centres
     1. **On-Site Co-ordination Centre**

It is a function of the On-site Co-ordinator to determine the facility which should be used as the On-Site Co-ordination Centre.

It may also be appropriate depending on the circumstances to utilise a tent or other temporary structure or an appropriate space/building adjacent to the site.

* + 1. **Local Authority Crisis Management Team**

The Cavan County Council Crisis Management Team will meet in the Council Chamber at the Courthouse, Cavan Town. The Crisis Management Team Action Plan in Appendix 2 – Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure provides details of the members of the crisis management team and their mobilisation procedure.

* + 1. **Local Co-ordination Centre**

The Courthouse, Cavan is to serve as the Local Co-ordination Centre.

Appendix 2-Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure provides detailed Action Plans for the mobilisation of appropriate staff members who can assist with the administrative and support functions at the local co-ordination centre.

In the event that the primary Local Co-ordination Centre is inaccessible due to the nature and location of the major emergency arrangements have been provided to utilise the Local Co-ordination Centre of another adjoining county for the purpose of co-ordination at the local level.

* + 1. **Regional Co-ordination Centre**

Where a regional Major Emergency has been declared by the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Centre that Local Co-ordination Centre shall be

the Regional Co-ordination Centre and communications links to the other Local Co-ordination Centres involved in the regional level response shall be established.

* + 1. **Information Management**

Cavan County Council have nominated a number of personnel and alternates to act as information management officers both at the incident site and at the local co-ordination centre.

The function of the information manager will be to interrogate, test, process and present all incoming information required for the decision making process.

Details of the nominated personnel and their functions are outlined in the Information/Action Management Officer Action Plan in Appendix 2 - Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure.

* 1. Communications Facilities
     1. **Communications Systems**

Cavan 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. In this respect the following communications systems are available to the Local Authority:

* Fire service

All front line appliances are equipped with radios and have the ability to communicate within the functional area of Cavan County Council. Also the fire service has hand held radios (UHF) available on all its appliances. In addition the Fire Service has a small Incident Command Vehicle located at Fire Brigade HQ. This vehicle is equipped with the following communications equipment:

* 2 no. UHF radios
* 2 no. VHF radios
* 1 no. marine radio
* Satellite Phone Communication System
* Mobile Phone
* Fax system

This vehicle is mobilised through the ERCC and will form part of the fire service response to a major emergency incident.

* Civil Defence

The Civil Defence operate both mobile radio (VHF) for communication between vehicles and communication centres and hand-portable radio (UHF) for communication on site.

* Mobile/Fixed Communications

The use of mobile phone is likely to be the predominant form of communication for other Cavan County Council services. It may also be possible in certain situations to provide fixed line telecommunications at the site to communicate with the Local Co-ordination Group and the County Council’s Crisis Management Team.

* + 1. **Inter-Agency communication on-site**

It is the responsibility of the fire service to provide a set of functioning hand portable radios, to specifically facilitate inter-agency communication at the site of the major emergency. These radios should operate on Channel 10 in accordance with the Fire Fighters Handbook.

It is the responsibility of the other agencies to ensure they are fully aware of the operational aspects of the radios they receive.

The fire service will provide 6 no. hand portable radios carried on the incident command vehicle. The distribution of the hand portable radios will be at the discretion of the On-site Co-ordinator, subject to a minimum of 1 no. hand portable radio issued to each of the Controllers of Operations or their designated command support staff.

With respect to other agencies operating at the site the issue of hand portable radios will be subject to availability and the prioritisation of the On-site Co-ordinator.

* + 1. **Communications between Site and Co-ordination Centres**

All communications between the 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 and the co-ordination centre will be facilitated by way of radio / phone system available to relevant personnel at the time.

* + 1. **Note on Security of Transmissions**

No communications system is secure from eavesdroppers. Radio scanners capable of receiving Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance and local authority radio transmissions are readily available. This should be borne in mind when wording any transmission, including cellular telephone conversations, which may contain sensitive information.

* 1. Exercising the Lead Agency’s Co-ordination Roles
     1. **Lead Agency**

The Framework for Major Emergency Management provides that one of the three Principle Response Agencies will be designated as the lead agency for any major emergency and thereby assume responsibility for leading co-ordination. The lead agency has both the responsibility and mandate for the co-ordination function.

There are two mechanisms for determining and designating the lead agency, which are to be applied in sequence by the 3 Controllers of Operations at the Site. They are as follows:

1. Pre-nomination in accordance with the table provided in Appendix 8. This method pre-nominates the lead agency for various types of incident and this should be the primary method of determination for the lead agency
2. In the event that the emergency does not fall into the categorisations of the table in Appendix 8 then the lead agency by ‘default’ is the Local Authority (Cavan County Council)

Rapid determination of the lead agency is essential as this in turn determines which of the three Controllers of Operations is to act as the On-Site Co-ordinator.

The Controller of Operations for the Lead Agency is to act as the On-Site Co-ordinator.

The On-Site Co-ordinator should note the time that the determination of the lead agency was made in the presence of the other two Controllers of Operations.

The determination is to be communicated to all parties involved in the response.

* + 1. **Review and Transfer of Lead Agency**

The lead agency role may change over time, to reflect the changing circumstances of the 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 at the site and should be communicated as per the initial determination.***

* + 1. **Delivery of Co-ordination Function as Lead Agency**

Where Cavan County Council is the designated lead agency it shall have responsibility for the co-ordination function (in addition to its own functions) and should lead all co-ordination activity associated with the emergency (on-site, off-site, etc.) and make every effort to achieve a high level of co-ordination.

The co-ordination function for any emergency will include:

* ensuring involvement of the three principal response agencies and the principal emergency services in sharing information on the nature of the emergency situation;
* ensuring involvement of the range of organisations (other than principal response agencies) who may be requested to respond in co-ordination activities and arrangements;
* ensuring that mandated co-ordination decisions (see Section 5.4.4) 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.
  1. Public Information

In certain situations, it may be crucial for the provision of 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 should take over the task of co-ordinating the provision of information to the public as soon as it meets. This activity should be co-ordinated by the lead agency.

The Local Co-ordination Group may establish a sub-group for this purpose and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available. This may include the use of dedicated “help-lines”, web-pages, Aertel, automatic text messaging, as well as through liaison with the media

The Local Co-ordination Centre should brief the lead Government Department on the situation using the generic information management system. Issues arising should be developed as necessary between the Local Co-ordination Group and the lead Government Department. Where appropriate, the Government Press Secretary, in conjunction with the press office of the lead Department, will co-ordinate communications with the public/media at national level.

* + 1. **Public Notices**

In situations where early warning and special public warning arrangements are required this will be done by the appropriate means.

The public can be kept informed by use of the following:

* Local Broadcasters
* Emergency Helpline Service
* Internet Service

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

* Television and Radio – arrangements exist whereby emergency announcements can be made on RTE Television and Radio Channels
* Television Text Services – not for emergency alerts but can be useful for posting more information than would be communicable by emergency calls or broadcasts.

Details for various media organisations have been provided in the Media Liaison Officer Action Plan and also in Appendix 6 –Mobilising External Resources

* 1. The Media
     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 a ‘Guide to working with the Media’ for further information.*

To facilitate the dissemination of information to the media and to the general public, Cavan County Council have appointed:

* A Local Authority Media Liaison Officer (Emergency Site)
* A Local Authority Media Liaison Officer (Local Co-ordination Centre)

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.

The details of the nominated Media Liaison Officers are given in the Media Liaison Officer Action Plan of Appendix 2 - Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure. Further details of the duties and responsibilities of the Media Liaison Officers in relation to a Major Emergency are given in Media Liaison Officers Action Plan.

As indicated in Section 7.7.1 where it is appropriate, the Government Press Secretary, in conjunction with the press office of the lead Department, will co-ordinate communications with the public/media at national level.

* + 1. **Arrangements for Media On Site**

It is the responsibility of the lead agency to establish and run a Media Centre.

The Media Centre is a building/area specifically designated for use by the media, and for liaison between the media and the principal response agencies

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.

Each principal response agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the site.

*The activities of the Media Liaison Officers on site should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency.*

**Please note the following:**

* All statements to the media shall be cleared with the On-Site Co-ordinator or his/her Media Liaison Officer.
* All information regarding casualties shall be dealt with by An Garda Síochána.
  + 1. **Arrangements for Media at Local and/or Regional Co-ordination Centres**

The Local 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 Coordination Centre and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency.

*All statements to the media at this level should be cleared with the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group.*

**Regular media briefings should be scheduled to suit television and radio broadcasts.**

These briefings should also be used to promulgate help-line telephone numbers and necessary public information messages. Background information that has been compiled before the event can be used to inform holding statements for use during the early stages of the incident.

**In many situations media attention will move quickly away from the site to other locations, including the Local Co-ordination Centre, hospitals where casualties are being treated and mortuaries and, therefore, arrangements for the media at or adjacent to these locations will need to be provided.**

* + 1. **Media Arrangements at, or adjacent to, other locations associated with the major emergency**

In situations where the media are located at, or adjacent to other locations associated with the major emergency e.g. hospitals, mortuaries etc. As stated previously the Local Co-ordination Group should take the lead in terms of working with the media, away from the site. The local authority media liaison officer at the local Co-ordination Centre will in conjunction with the Media Liaison Officers of the Health Services Executive and An Garda Síochána respectively make suitable arrangements for the media at the particular location(s), with the activities of these officers co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the Lead Agency.

* 1. Site Management Arrangements
     1. **Site Plan Layout**

The following is a typical site management arrangement that should be aspired to at all major emergency sites.

Idealised Site Management Arrangements

BODY

HOLDING

AREA

CASUALTY CLEARING STATION

AMBULANCE LOADING

POINT

HSE

HOLDING

AREA

AGS

HOLDING

AREA

**DANGER**

**AREA**

**SITE**

**CONTROL**

**POINT**

L.A.

HOLDING

AREA

MEDIA

CENTRE

**W**

**I**

**N**

**D**

**\_\_\_ CORDON ACCESS POINTS**

As soon as possible, the On-site Co-ordinator should discuss and agree the principal site arrangements with the other Controllers of Operations. Once agreed, the resulting site plan should be disseminated for implementation to all responding organisations.

* + - 1. **Components of a Typical Site Plan**

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 Point
* Holding Areas for different services
* Principal Response Agency Control Points
* Site Control Point
* On-site Co-ordination Centre
* Casualty Clearing Station
* Ambulance Loading Area
* Body Holding Area
* Survivor Reception Centre
* Friends and Relative Reception Centre
* Media Centre

The Inner, Outer and Traffic Cordons will be established by An Garda Síochána after decision by and/or agreement with On-site Co-ordinator. Please refer to Appendix 10 - Idealised Scene Management Arrangements for further details on the various aspects.

The following points should be noted with respect of the individual components specified above:

1. Persons working within the Inner Cordon are to have the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
2. The inner cordon access point should be established as soon as possible to **facilitate and record** the flow of responders into and out of the working area. This access point is to be under the control of the lead agency and should have a direct link back to the On-Site Co-ordination Centre.
3. The outer cordon access point is to be established by An Garda Síochána.
4. Where it is necessary to operate in a Danger Area the normal incident and safety arrangements are to be followed and relevant officers should continue to exercise command/control over their own personnel working in the Danger Area.

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 the Danger Area, a signal, comprising the repeated sounding of a siren for ten seconds on, ten seconds off, will be given.

All personnel should withdraw from the Danger Area on hearing this signal.

* + 1. **Control of Access / Identification of LA personnel & services**

All local authority personnel responding to an emergency shall wear (or carry) the form of identification issued to them and shall ensure that their vehicles are adequately identified. Where identification is not permanently retained on the person or vehicle, it should be obtained from the Local Authority Holding Area.

Access beyond Cordons will not be permitted in the absence of the appropriate identification.

(Please refer to Appendix 10 - Idealised Scene Management Arrangements regarding site of the LA Holding Area)

All personnel responding to an emergency are to wear the clothing set out in Appendix 9 – Identification of Personnel at the Site of a Major Emergency for identification purposes.

* + 1. **Air Exclusion Zones - NOTAM**

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 Authority. 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 Authority.

* 1. Mobilising Additional Resources
     1. **External Resources**

Please refer to Appendix 6 - Mobilising External Resources for details regarding the mobilisation of external resources. External organisations/agencies referenced in the appendix include:

* Defence Forces;
* The Irish Red Cross
* Voluntary Emergency Services;
* Utilities
* Private Sector

Details relating to the mobilisation of the local Civil Defence organisation are provided in the Civil Defence Action Plan in Appendix 2 – Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure.

* + 1. **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.

The Voluntary Emergency Services sector can provide additional equipment and support in the event of a major emergency. Voluntary Emergency Services will link to the Principal response Agencies in accordance with the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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 |

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 within that organisation

* + 1. **Arrangement for Liaison with Utilities**

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. Where possible representatives of individual utilities on site should be invited to provide a representative for the On-Site Co-ordination Group.

It is also recommended that individual utilities be invited to attend and participate in relevant work of Local Co-ordination Groups

* + 1. **Arrangements for integration of Casual Volunteers**

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.

* + 1. **Arrangements for command, control, co-ordination and demobilisation of organisations mobilised to site**

It is a function of each Principal Response Agency to exercise control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site. The internal command and control of the service will reside within that particular service subject to the overall control and direction of the Controller of Operations.

Arrangements for demobilisation are as indicated in Section 7.20

* + 1. **Mutual Aid Arrangements**

In the event that mutual aid from neighbouring Local Authorities is required the On-Site Co-ordinator shall request the provision of mutual aid.

Where the mutual aid is required from a neighbouring Local Authority then the Local Authority representative on the Local Co-ordination Group in conjunction with the Local Authority Crisis Management Team will make the necessary arrangements for the provision of aid from neighbouring Local Authorities.

* + 1. **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.

Regional Co-ordination Groups needing assistance from neighbouring regions, including border regions needing assistance from Northern Ireland, should make the request directly (on a mutual aid basis).

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.

* + 1. **Requests for International Assistance**

During a major emergency, agencies should inform the Local/Regional Co-ordination Centre of any unilateral activation of arrangements with services in Northern Ireland.

Where a Local/Regional Co-ordination Group determines that additional assistance, above that arranged by the individual services, should be sought or that information on a situation should be made available to authorities in Northern Ireland, the request/information should be transmitted by An Garda Síochána to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, in accordance with internal code procedures of An Garda Síochána.

Where appropriate, representatives of the equivalent of the principal response agencies in Northern Ireland should be invited to participate in Local/Regional Co-ordination Groups.

The European Community has established a Community Mechanism to facilitate the provision of assistance between the member states in the event of major emergencies.

Requests for such assistance should be made by the chair of the Local or Regional Coordination Group to the National Liaison Officer at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

* 1. Casualty and Survivor Arrangements
     1. **General**

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

As well as making provision for casualties and survivors, the principal response agencies should also make arrangements for the reception, facilitation and support of the friends and relatives of some or all of these individuals.

* + 1. **Injured**
       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 labelled, using Triage Cards, and moved to a Casualty Clearing Station. The purpose of this labelling 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.

Where transport to hospital is required this will be provided by the ambulance service. In certain circumstances it may be required to provide the assistance of the Civil Defence to aid in the transport of casualties to hospital.

This will be arranged between the On-Site Co-ordinator and the other two Controllers of Operations.

* + - 1. **Transport of lightly injured or uninjured**

In circumstances where lightly injured or uninjured persons are to be transported from the site, the Civil Defence may be requested to aid in this task.

This will be arranged between the On-Site Co-ordinator and the other two Controllers of Operations.

* + - 1. **Casualty Clearing Station, Ambulance Loading & Receiving Hospitals**

The Casualty Clearing Station is established at the site by the Ambulance Service, in consultation with the Health Service Executive Controller and the Site Medical Officer.

Here, casualties are collected, further triaged, treated, as necessary, and prepared for transport to hospital. An Ambulance Loading area will be established close to the casualty clearing station.

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.

* + 1. **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 Authority may assist An Garda Síochána in this function.

When a doctor has pronounced an individual dead, arrangements in respect of the body are the responsibility of the local Coroner’s Office, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána.

* + - 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

The Coroner 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.

Futher information on procedures for dealing with fatalities is set out in Appendix 14 – Fatal Casualties, including contact details for the district coroner.

* + - 1. **Dealing with fatalities both on-site and off-site**

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

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

Where circumstances require it, a Temporary Mortuary may be established. This decision should be made by the Local Co-ordination Group, in consultation with the Coroner.

The provision of a Temporary Mortuary is the responsibility of the Local Authority.

* + - 1. **Identification of the Deceased**

The Coroner has overall responsibility for the identification of bodies and remains and s/he will be assisted by An Garda Síochána.

* + 1. **Survivors**

Where considered appropriate, aSurvivor 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 the Local Authority to establish and run the Survivor Reception Centre. Suitable locations for such a centre would include Recreation Centres, Parish Halls, Local Church, Local School or any other large building that accommodates large numbers of people. The Civil Defence Temporary Accommodation Plan has details of suitable locations.

It is a function of the Civil Defence to operate the reception centre and to log all relevant information regarding the survivors attending the centre as well as to cater for the welfare needs of the survivors.

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.).

It may also be appropriate for the voluntary ambulance services 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.

Transport from the Survivor Reception Centre to home/meet relatives/safe place should be arranged as soon as it is practicable.

* + 1. **Casualty Information** 
       1. **The Casualty Bureau**

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

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

* + - 1. **Local Authority assistance collecting Casualty Information**

All local authority services should ensure that any information collected by them on any casualty is transferred via An Garda Síochána to the Casualty Bureau*.*

* + 1. **Friends’ and Relatives’ Reception Centres**

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

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

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

There will also be a need for a reliable process to establish the credentials of friends and relatives.

* + 1. **Non-National Casualties**
       1. **Contacting International Embassies**

It is possible that some incidents 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 Foreign Affairs (which operates an out of hours Duty Officer system) should be approached for appropriate assistance and liaison purposes.

* + - 1. **Foreign Language Communications Resources**

The Department of Justice should be approached if assistance is required in obtaining interpreters from private sector providers.

It should also be noted that An Garda Síochána are likely to have a listing of service providers for interpretation.

* + 1. **Pastoral and Psycho-Social Support**

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

The On-Site Co-ordinator will ensure that, where appropriate, pastoral services are mobilised to the site and facilitated by the PRA’s in their work with casualties and survivors.

* 1. Emergencies involving Hazardous Substances
     1. **Arrangements for dealing with Hazardous Materials 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 CBRN incident are contained in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Suspect Chemical and Biological Agents arising from terrorist activity

* + 1. **CCBRN Incidents**

Where terrorist involvement is suspected, An Garda Síochána will act as the lead agency.

CCBRN incident is the collective term for Conventional Explosive, Chemical Substance, Biological agents, Radiological & Nuclear materials incidents.

Some issues relating to managing the response to certain CCBRN incidents are set out in two protocols for dealing with suspected chemical and biological agents. 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

* + 1. **Biological Incidents**

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

* + 1. **National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan**

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

* + 1. **Nuclear/Radiological Incidents**

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 (NEPNA) are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological/ Nuclear Emergencies (in Draft)

* + 1. **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 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 contamination 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.

Please refer to Appendix 13 – Hazmat & Decontamination for further Details.

* 1. Protecting Threatened Populations
     1. **Evacuation / Sheltering**

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.

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

* + 1. **Role of Individual PRAs in Evacuation**

Where decided upon, the process of evacuation will be undertaken by An Garda Síochána, with the assistance of the other services as appropriate.

It is a function of the Local Authority to advise on protection of persons threatened, by sheltering or evacuation.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to provide the Rest Centre(s) for evacuated populations. Civil Defence will assist with the operation of the Rest Centre(s). Assistance from the HSE and other voluntary services may be required to meet the welfare needs of evacuees. Evacuees should be documented and basic details passed to the casualty bureau. Civil Defence can assist in this role.

* + 1. **Arrangements for involvement of 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.

* 1. Early and Public Warning Systems
     1. **Monitoring of potentially hazardous situations**

Met Éireann operates a “Public Service Severe Weather Warning” system whereby they notify Local Authorities where weather conditions are forecast to meet specified criteria. Not all severe weather warnings/events will be a Major Emergency. However the procedures/measures outlined in Cavan County Council’s Severe Weather Plan should be followed.

In certain situations where the forecast weather is considered sufficiently severe the Members of the Crisis Management Team are to be notified to assess the need for further action.

Please refer to Appendix 11 for further details on the criteria for the severe weather warnings.

Other warnings may be issued such as in the event of contamination of drinking water supplies where there is a joint protocol between the Local Authority and the HSE for warning the public for unsatisfactory drinking water results.

* + 1. **Methods of Warning**

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
* Automated Text services
* Established site specific warning systems.
  1. Emergencies Arising on Inland Waterways
     1. **Liaison with Irish Coast Guard**

Cavan County Council can provide support to the Irish Coast Guard in the carrying out of its functions in respect of emergencies arising on Inland Waterways through the Civil Defence.

The Irish Coast Guard should contact the Civil Defence Officer or Assistant Civil Defence Officer to facilitate any request for assistance.

* + 1. **Receiving 999/112 and mobilising 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.

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

* 1. Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations
     1. **General**

Each principal response agency (and other responding organisation) is responsible for the Safety, Health and Welfare of its staff responding to emergencies and should operate its own safety (including personal protective equipment) and welfare management procedures.

As such all Local Authority safety and welfare procedures are applicable to Local Authority staff responding to the Major Emergency.

* + 1. **Safety of 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.

* + 1. **Danger Area**

Each service should establish from the On-Site Co-ordinator if a “Danger Area” has been defined as part of site management arrangements and, if so, what particular safety provisions may apply.

Each agency is responsible for the Health and safety provisions of its staff operating within the “Danger Area”.

* + 1. **Operating within a Danger Area and Evacuation Signal**

The activities of all agencies within the “Danger Area” shall be under the overall control and direction of the Chief Fire Officer or designated alternates.

However, the persons in charge of the activities of these agencies shall, subject to the above, continue to exercise operational control over their agencies activities and shall ensure that all necessary health and safety, measures and procedures are implemented.

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 the Danger Area, a signal, comprising the repeated sounding of a siren for ten seconds on, ten seconds off, will be given.

All personnel should withdraw from the Danger Area on hearing this signal.

* + 1. **Welfare of Emergency Responders**

The Local Authority Controller should ensure that appropriate rest, sanitary and refreshment facilities are provided for response personnel, either at the site or in an appropriate adjoining location.

Suitable provision for those involved in the incident may have to be considered also.

These facilities may include the provision of food and drink, rest facilities and sanitary facilities.

A number of Rest Centres have been identified in the Temporary Accommodation Plan prepared by Cavan Civil Defence and the local authority outdoor staff welfare units (equipped with small kitchen and toilet) may also be available for deployment to the site.

* + 1. **Psycho-social support for personnel**

A Critical Incident Stress Management facility is available to all fire service personnel if requested. Following a major emergency incident this facility should also be made available to support staff, even if they are not directly involved at the scene, e.g. administration staff, drivers and communications staff if required.

* 1. Logistical Issues/Protracted Incidents
     1. **Arrangements for Rotation of Front Line Rescue/Field Staff**

Where the response to an incident is expected to be of a protracted nature the Controller of Operations shall ensure that there are sufficient arrangements to cater for the relief of responding personnel.

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

The Controller of Operations shall make arrangements on-site for the provision of staff welfare measures in accordance with the Local Authority Function to provide welfare for all emergency responders to the site.

* + 1. **Reorganising 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, who are involved at the ‘coalface’.

The Chair of the Local Authority Crisis Management Team shall make arrangements for the provision of welfare measures at the Local Co-ordination Centre.

* + 1. **Arrangements for initial and ongoing welfare of 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. The facilities required may include the provision of food and drink, rest facilities and sanitary facilities.

A number of Rest Centres have been identified in the Temporary Accommodation Plan prepared by Cavan Civil Defence and the local authority outdoor staff welfare units (equipped with small kitchen and toilet) may also be available for deployment to the site.

* + 1. **Community Liaison**

The Local Co-ordination Group, On-Site Co-ordination Group and the Crisis Management team shall ensure that appropriate community liaison initiatives are conducted, particularly when an incident is of a protracted nature, to ensure that the communities affected by an incident are informed appropriately.

* 1. Investigations
     1. **Investigations arising from the emergency**

If there is reason to believe that a criminal act was a contributory factor to a major emergency, An Garda Síochána will begin an investigation, in parallel with the emergency response. An Garda Síochána is responsible for carrying out criminal investigations and in this role may facilitate inquiries carried out by other agencies with an investigative mandate. An Garda Síochána may also be requested to conduct investigations on any aspect of an emergency on behalf of a body charged with holding an inquiry, etc.

It may be necessary for Local Authority staff to provide statements to the investigative agencies on their involvement in the major emergency response

* + 1. **Minimising the disruption of evidence**

One of the Local Authority functions is to provide support for An Garda Síochána forensic work. This should also extend to investigations carried out by other agencies as appropriate.

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. 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.

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, **Note: The priority of the response remains the protection of life.**

The local authority will have some role to play in the site clearance, demolition, clean-up operations, removal and disposal of debris and such activity is only to be done following consultation with and approval of An Garda Síochána (or other investigative body) to avoid the possible unnecessary destruction of evidence.

* + 1. **Other parties with investigative mandates**

Any agency 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.

In some cases, Protocols and Memorandums of Understanding have been established as an effective way of ensuring adequate liaison between different agencies carrying out investigations.

The following are some agencies that may have an investigative function with regard to a Major Emergency depending on the nature of the incident:

* Air Accident Investigation Unit
* Health and Safety Authority
* Environmental Protection Agency
  1. Community/VIP’s/Observers
     1. **Community links**

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 Representative and Community Liaison Officers within in the community

* + 1. **Public Representatives/Dignitaries/VIPs**

Public representatives and other dignitaries may wish to attend the site of the emergency, as well as associated facilities, such as hospitals, to express sympathy on behalf of the public to the injured and bereaved, and to support the emergency response workers.

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.

***All requests for visits to the site or facilities associated with it are to be referred to the Local Co-ordination Group.***

Requests for visits to agency specific locations are to be referred to that agency’s management.

As a general rule, VIPs are to be advised not to visit sites where dangers still exist or where ongoing rescues are in progress.

* + 1. **Observers**

Multiple requests may be received from persons/groups who wish to observe the response operations. 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.

* 1. Standing Down the Major Emergency
     1. **Procedure for Standing down the Emergency**

This plan may be stood down in any of the following ways depending on the particular circumstances:

It may be stood down:

* By the person who activated the plan when an emergency which was imminent does not actually occur.
* By the Controller of Operations in respect of local authority activities at the site of the emergency following consultation with the On-Site Co-ordinator or
* By the designated local authority representative on the co-ordinating group in respect of local authority activities other than those at the site.

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

The following additional provisions apply to standing down the emergency:-

* Before standing down this plan, the Controller of Operations shall advise the local authority representative on the local co-ordinating group,
* Even after this plan has been stood down, certain local authority services may be required to continue carrying out activities related to the emergency and in such circumstances full control shall revert to the heads of those services.
  + 1. **Procedure for Standing down individual agency/service etc.**

When a response is no longer required from any agency, service, contractor or individual requested to provide assistance by the local authority and following consultation with the Controllers of Operations of the other two agencies, the Local Authority Controller of Operations shall inform them of the decision to stand them down.

* + 1. **Operational Debriefing and reporting of activity**

Following the stand down of the Major Emergency the Local Authority is to carry out an operational debriefing of its involvement in the response and document this debriefing in a report.

A multi-agency debrief hosted by the lead agency involving all services which were part of the response should be carried out. Lessons learned from these debriefs are to be incorporated into the plan.

Operational debriefs should 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.

Section 8

Agency Specific Elements and Sub-Plans

* 1. **Agency Specific Elements and Plans**

The following plans have been developed within Cavan County Council as a support to the Major Emergency Management process:

* Drinking Water Incident Response Plan
* Severe Weather Plan (refer to Section 11 of this plan for further information)
* Radiological Emergencies Plan (Cavan Civil Defence)
* Cavan Civil Defence Temporary Accommodation

Section 9

Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

* 1. **Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination**

A plan for Regional Level Co-ordination has been developed within the North East Major Emergency Management Region. It may be activated where the nature of an emergency is such that:

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

This activation may be used to access resources available within a region to provide regional level assistance.

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination as part of the Mandate of the Designated Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group.

The boundaries of the actual “region” for response purposes should be determined by the lead agency, which has declared the regional level emergency, in light of the circumstances prevailing, or likely to develop. The regions for response purposes need not coincide necessarily with the pre-determined regions for preparedness.

The lead agency which has declared the regional level emergency will convene and chair the Regional Co-ordination Group.

Depending on the circumstances, the goal of regional co-ordination may be achieved by using:

* A single Regional Co-ordination Centre; or
* A Regional Co-ordination Centre supported by one or more Local Co-ordination Centres.

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 Coordinating Group declaring the regional level emergency and will depend on the location and nature of the emergency and any associated infrastructural damage.

When a Regional Co-ordination Centre is activated, it too becomes a key information management system node, with links to each active Local Co-ordination Centre and onward to the Lead Government Department and/or National Emergency Co-ordination Centre, as appropriate.

Section 10

Links With National Emergency Plans

* 1. **National Emergencies**

There are a number of potential emergencies which if they occur are most likely to be on a national scale – including nuclear accidents, infectious disease outbreaks (e.g. smallpox, influenza pandemic) or outbreaks of animal disease (e.g. foot and mouth, avian flu). In contrast with major emergencies, the characteristics of these emergencies may include being non-site specific and occurring over an extended time period. In these situations national bodies, operating in accordance with National Emergency Plans, may call upon the principal response agencies to assist in responding to, or to perform their normal functions/ roles arising from, a national level emergency.

The envisaged roles can include:

* Monitoring and/or reporting on the impact of the emergency in the functional area of the agency;
* Undertaking pre-assigned roles in National Emergency Plans, such as coordinating/ implementing certain countermeasures in their functional area;
* Undertaking relevant tasks following an emergency/crisis; or
* Acting as a communications and co-ordination conduit.

*The co-ordination arrangements of local Major Emergency Plans may be activated in support of these National Emergency Plans.*

* + 1. **National Emergency Plans**

The following National emergency Plans are likely to require the activation of some or all parts of this Major Emergency Plan:

* National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents (NEPNA);
* National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan;
* Animal Health Plan.
  1. **Marine Incident**

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

* 1. **Ministerial Authority**

This plan may be activated by a Minister of Government in light of an emergency/crisis situation.

Section 11

Severe Weather Plans

* 1. **Severe Weather Plans**

Severe weather emergencies may involve significant threats to infrastructure and support may be required for vulnerable sections of the community. Section 5.4.2 and Appendix F7 of the Framework for Major Emergency Management provides that Local Authorities are the lead agency for co-ordinating the response to severe weather events.

Arrangements have been put in place by Met Éireann to issue public service severe weather warnings to the Local Authorities. A copy of theses arrangements have been included in the Appendices of this plan.

Cavan County Council has developed a Severe Weather Plan in response to the need to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to receive and respond promptly to public service severe weather warnings issued by Met Éireann.

This plan has been developed in respect of

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

Flooding incidents in County Cavan do not tend to be on a scale necessary to warrant the declaration of a major emergency. However flooding incidents do occur on a smaller scale and can cause a degree of damage to health, property and infrastructure. It has also become apparent over recent years that due to changing weather patterns flooding incidents are becoming more unpredictable in their occurrence and severity. As such Cavan County Council has a flood response strategy in place to deal with such incidents.

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

The Severe Weather Plan provides detail on the Local Authority response to occurrences of severe weather events other than flooding such as Storms or Heavy Snow.

Section 12

Site and Event Specific Arrangements and Plans

* 1. **Seveso Sites**

According to the Central Competent Authority, the Health and Safety Authority, at present there are no sites within the functional area of Cavan County Council that are designated Upper or Lower tier sites under the Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 or its antecedent the European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006.

Section 13

The Recovery Phase

* 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 agency and 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.

* + 1. **Assisting the physical and emotional needs of those affected**

The specific requirements for the Local Authority in the recovery process include

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

It is recommended that each agency’s Crisis Management Team should continue to function until the issues arising in the response phase are more appropriately dealt with by the agency’s normal management processes.

* + 1. **Managing Public Appeals and External Aid**

The need for co-ordination of emerging recovery issues may arise on the agenda of the Local Co-ordination Group 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 Local Co-ordination Group are largely recovery focussed, it may be appropriate to re-title the group as the **Local Recovery Co-ordination Group**. From the earliest stage, it may be appropriate also for the Local (Recovery) Co-ordination Group to appoint a **Recovery Working Group** to plan ahead.

The strategic management function of the Local Co-ordination group will include taking whatever steps are necessary to start to plan for recovery.

In the past, the Government has instituted hardship relief schemes, administered by the Red Cross, in the aftermath of a number of emergencies. Cavan County Council as part of co-ordination of recovery efforts and in conjunction with the other principle response agencies may be involved in this aspect as well as with other initiatives, such as public appeals to raise funds for victims.

* 1. **Clean-up**

It is a function of the Local Authority to arrange/oversee the clean up of the affected area following a Major Emergency. The Crisis Management Team of the Local Authority will arrange/oversee the clean up aspects of the recovery phase following consultation with An Garda Síochána (or other investigative body) to avoid the possible unnecessary destruction of evidence (Please refer to Section 7.18).

* 1. **Restoration of Infrastructure and Services**

The Local Co-ordination Group shall be reflective of the need to restore public services affected by a Major Emergency Incident. The Crisis Management Team of the Local Authority shall operate in conjunction with the Recovery Working Group, internal staff and appropriate external agencies to facilitate the restoration of public services, the rebuilding of community and infrastructure and in responding to community welfare needs as appropriate.

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’.

The Local Recovery Co-ordination Group and the Recovery Working Group shall take steps to ensure the staff welfare of the Local Authority Staff.

Section 14

Review of the Major Emergency Plan

* 1. **Annual Review**

This plan is to be reviewed and amended as necessary within Cavan County Council on an annual basis. The review shall follow the guidance provided in the Guidance provided by the National Steering group “A Guide to Undertaking an Appraisal”.

A review should also be held following any exercises or incidents. The review should

* Update the roles of individuals that hold key positions
* Update the risk holders within the functional area of Cavan County Council
* Update names and numbers of utility companies, private companies etc
* Review current risk assessments and update as required.
* Plan exercises

The record of issues and amendments at the beginning of this document is to be completed following every amendment to the plan.

* 1. **External Review**

The record of issues and amendments at the beginning of this document is to be completed following every amendment to the plan.

* + 1. **Regional Inter - Agency Review**

The plan is to be reviewed annually for interoperability in conjunction with the Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochána, Meath County Council, Monaghan County Council and Louth Local Authorities at the Regional Major Emergency Steering & Working Group levels. Any issues arising from this review are to be referred back to Cavan County Council for the appropriate action. In cases of disagreement between a principle response agency and the Regional Steering Group, the National Steering Group is to be consulted and shall decide on the issues.

* + 1. **Review by Parent Department**

This plan is to be reviewed and validated annually by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. Any issues arising from this review are to be referred back to Cavan County Council for the appropriate action.

* 1. **Review Following Declaration of Major Emergency**

After every declaration of a major emergency and activation of the plan the following aspects are to be reviewed and reported upon:

* + 1. **Performance of Cavan County Council in carrying out its functions**

This review is to be carried out internally within the local authority following the appropriate debriefing of participants previously mentioned in Section 7.20. The review will be conducted by the crisis management team and a report of the findings produced.

* + 1. **The Co-ordination Function**

This review and report is to be external and in conjunction with the other principal response agencies involved in the response.

The review of the inter-agency coordination should be hosted by the lead agency and involve all services which were part of the response. The purpose of the review should be to formulate the lessons learned from the incident in relation to co-ordination and to document these.

Any issues arising from this review are to be referred back to Cavan County Council for the appropriate action. In cases of disagreement, the National Steering Group is to be consulted and shall decide on the issues.

* + 1. **Reporting**

A composite report, based on appropriate input from each principal response agency’s internal report and the report on co-ordination, on every declared major emergency should be compiled by the principal response agency which was the initial lead agency for submission within a reasonable timescale to the relevant Regional Steering Group and the National Steering Group.

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Cavan County Council

Major Emergency Plan 2016