

# A Guide to Plan Preparation



# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b>	i
<b>CHAPTER 1:</b> Introduction	1
<b>CHAPTER 2:</b> The Policy Background to Plan Preparation	3
<b>CHAPTER 3:</b> Types of Emergency Plan	7
<b>CHAPTER 4:</b> Getting Started	9
<b>CHAPTER 5:</b> Plan Contents	13
<b>CHAPTER 6:</b> Putting it all Together	25
<b>CHAPTER 7:</b> Consultation and Publication	29
<b>CHAPTER 8:</b> Taking it all Apart – Documentation And Training	33
<b>CHAPTER 9:</b> Validation, Review and Revision	37
<b>CHAPTER 10:</b> Conclusion	41
<b>ANNEX A:</b> Bibliography	43
<b>ANNEX B:</b> Plan Framework	45































# CHAPTER 5

## PLAN CONTENTS

This chapter sets out the basic elements which make up an emergency plan. Obviously, the detail will vary with the type of plan and response which it covers. **A plan framework which is consistent with this chapter is at Annex B.**

### Section 1: Introduction to the plan

An introduction at the beginning of the plan should be used to explain what the plan is intended to achieve. This will be of particular importance for those unfamiliar with the plan. The introduction should also contain a statement of commitment to the plan by the organisation's senior management. This could take the form of a Foreword or endorsement, signed by a senior officer (eg the Chief Executive) in the organisation. Departments may wish to seek the endorsement of Ministers.

It is important that the introduction leaves readers of the plan in no doubt about its scope, so as to avoid incorrect expectations of it:

- a. **Describe why the plan is needed.** This helps people inside and outside the organisation understand the context of the plan.
- b. **Describe what the plan will achieve.** It is important that the plan states its objectives so that everyone is clear about what it is, and is not, supposed to achieve. Setting objectives is particularly important, as the plan will be judged on whether or not it achieves its objectives, rather than on whether it is, or would be, successful in meeting the needs of a particular emergency situation.
- c. **Identify the type of emergency which the plan will address.** For a generic plan, this should not be too prescriptive since the intention is to give those reading, or being trained in, the plan, a broad feel for the types of scenario in which it might be used. Site-, risk-, or function-specific plans can give more detailed information on the circumstances in which they would be invoked.
- d. **Define the criteria for invoking or activating the plan. *This is a key element of the plan*,** as one of the biggest problems with emergency response is to persuade people to activate plans. Often, an organisation will try to respond to an incident in an ad hoc way, and by the time anyone acknowledges that the plan should be activated it is too late for it to be effective. The plan should specify in what circumstances it should be invoked, how these circumstances will be identified and who (always more than one person) has the authority to invoke the plan. The mechanisms of plan activation are covered under Section 3, but the introduction should set out the principles of activation circumstances, responsibility for activation and any interactions with other organisations' plans which would influence the decision to activate the plan.
- e. **State clearly the assumptions made** on issues such as availability of resources and infrastructure.







- f. **Describe any changes to organisational and management structures needed to ensure an effective emergency response.** These need to be as few as possible, to avoid confusion. If significant changes to normal procedures are necessary, staff should be trained in them and given regular opportunity to practice.
- g. **Define support staff requirements.** These are the people (admin staff, caterers, stores staff, drivers etc) needed to give back-up to the direct responders listed in Section 2. They are often overlooked in plans, and so are unaware, or unsure, of their contribution to the emergency response. As with the direct response staff, the plan needs to allow for support staff to be rotated to ensure that everyone gets adequate breaks. The plan also needs to indicate what staff will keep normal business going, or at least maintain priority activities (see 4.q. below).
- h. **Describe how flexibility is to be achieved.** Emergency situations change and develop over time, often in unpredictable ways, so the plan must indicate how the organisation will ensure that its response remains appropriate throughout. This could be achieved, for example, by gathering and updating information on the situation, periodic assessments / reviews of the effectiveness of the response, arrangements to increase, decrease, prioritise or switch resources, and regular consultation with other responders.
- i. **Describe how a graduated response can be delivered.** The objective should be to match the response to the need. Remember, for some organisations not on the front line of the response, the greatest demand can come hours, days or even months down the line. This will require foresight, monitoring of the situation and a planned, managed, release of staff and other resources in response to need.
- j. **Specify the location and role of the organisation's Co-ordination / Management / Control Centre(s).** These may include agency or divisional Control Centres, an overall organisational Control/Co-ordination Centre and any inter-agency Co-ordination facilities provided as part of the organisation's lead function. The nature of the organisation's response will determine how sophisticated the Control Centre facilities should be. At a minimum, facilities should include good communications (preferably using a number of different technologies and routes), access to basic office equipment (photocopiers, computers, printers etc) and accommodation for meetings. A designated backup location is preferable, in case the first choice is unavailable. Designated Centres do not need to be near the scene of the incident so long as communication facilities are good. However, site-specific plans may use accommodation close to the risk site, but away from any likely hazards.
- k. **Clearly identify Co-ordination / Management / Control Centre managers and define their role.** Staff will also have to be identified to provide support to the manager – logging incoming or outgoing messages, preparing situation reports, managing communications etc.
- l. **Clearly identify how information will flow for the production of situation reports and updates as well as for media briefing.** Everyone should be aware of information flow lines, especially administrative staff who will have to support them. Information should not only flow upwards from operational staff to senior management and the media, but situation reports and notification of decisions made need to flow back down the chain so that operational staff are aware of what is happening.

- m. **State the role of the organisation's Head.** This should be a key strategic role – senior managers should not get involved in operational detail. Record who will take on this role in the absence of the Head of the organisation.
- n. **Describe the activities to be undertaken for the maintenance and preservation of records.** In any inquiry or legal proceedings arising from the emergency, all documents relating to an organisation's planning, training, exercises and response will be discoverable. Similarly, all decisions should be properly documented for future audit. The plan should therefore describe how information relating to the emergency, and decisions taken by individuals or committees will be recorded. This logging process can be either paper or IT-based, so long as permanent records are kept. Routine document destruction and clearing of electronic documents from directories should be suspended. Papers and electronic records relating to the emergency should be collected and placed in secure storage.
- o. **Describe the organisation's media liaison arrangements.** This will cover how the media can be used to get essential public information across and how the organisation will respond to media requests for information, interviews and analysis. Organisational Press Officers have a key role to play in the issue of public information, and they should be involved at the planning stage as well as during an emergency. They will have the necessary contacts with the media and can advise on wording, protocols etc. Any press releases or emergency announcements should be cleared with the lead organisation for the emergency.
- p. **Define links with other organisations** at the appropriate levels (operational, tactical, strategic) and describe how communications and inter-agency working will be managed. A flow chart may be a useful way of visualising connections. Include references to any protocols, Memoranda of Understanding or Service Level Agreements which relate to the emergency response set out in the plan.
- q. **Identify which normal services must be maintained and to what standards.** This will allow critical business needs to be taken into account when making decisions about resourcing the response. This is where emergency response plans and business continuity plans meet.
- r. **Describe the arrangements for formally moving to a new phase of the response or standing down the response.** It is important that the response is fully managed throughout its duration and not just in the initial stages. There should be formal arrangements for making decisions about scaling down a response, moving to a new phase or standing down the response altogether. These decisions should be taken in full consultation with other organisations involved in the response. There should also be formal arrangements for informing staff and other responding organisations about these decisions.

## Section 5: Long-term response

Even while the initial response is underway, planning should start for the long-term effort which will be necessary to promote recovery, restore normality and help individuals and communities come to terms with what has happened. This is much easier if advance thought has been given to the issues which may need to be addressed, and the organisation has some idea of how it will approach them.





## Section 8: Appendices

For ease of use and to ensure that key aspects of the plan are clear, it is usual to put details of responses and subsidiary plans into appendices at the end of the main body of the plan rather than to include them as part of the different sections. The nature of the appendices will change with the type of plan (generic, site-specific, event-specific etc). In general, generic plans may have a lot of appendices and subsidiary plans, dealing with specific risks, locations or functions. Where the main body of the plan is focused on a particular issue, there would be less need for appendices and subsidiary plans.

Appendices to plans could include:

- a. **Emergency contact list for the organisation.** This would be included in almost all plans and should include phone/pager numbers, radio details and addresses as required. It should cover the main first responders, their roles and a brief description of what events they should be notified of and any deputies or alternative alerting arrangements in the event of the first choice being unavailable. This appendix is what the initial contact will use to initiate the emergency response, so it is very important that it is kept up-to-date.
- b. **Emergency contact links for other organisations** including mutual and cross-border aid. This is another essential element of the plan, which should include alternative contact names/posts and means of communication and should be kept up-to-date.
- c. **Emergency resources, including communication systems and equipment.** This should include instructions on the location of resources, how they can be accessed (on a 24 hour basis, if that may be necessary) and operating instructions. Standard operating procedures for Control or Co-ordination Centres and other arrangements may be included here.
- d. **Security, access and identification of staff.** Even in an emergency it will be necessary to maintain an adequate level of safety, especially if staff are likely to be going into hazardous locations or working under stress. Building security should also be maintained for any Co-ordination or Management Centres.
- e. **Outlines of staff responsibilities,** on the basis of post held and emergency management/response role, not individual names. These job/role descriptions will be the main documents which post-holders need in order to understand their own role in the emergency and what is expected of them. A number of related documents may be required, each setting out the function, objectives and working methods for a post (Safety Manager, Control Centre Manager, Chairman of the internal Co-ordination/Control Group, Control Centre Support Staff etc).
- f. **Financial authority and records of expenditure.** This should give guidance on who has authority to make spending decisions and how those decisions will be made and recorded.
- g. **Insurance and legal considerations including preservation of records.** This should be prepared in consultation with the necessary finance and legal advisers.

- h. **Media policy and where to find competent or trained spokespersons.** Again, involve organisational Press Officers, but make sure that the appendix contains enough information for general readers to understand how the media response will work and who they should go to for help and advice if they are approached directly by representatives of the media.
- i. **Message handling, log sheets and log keeping.** A very important aspect of emergency response which is often overlooked. No matter how urgent and hectic the response, there should always be people whose job it is to keep a trace of information as it flows into and out of the organisation and to record discussions and decisions taken. The information in this appendix will supplement that in Section 4.n. on making and preserving records.
- j. **Briefing and hand-over procedures.** If the response is likely to extend over a period of time, shift-working will be necessary to ensure that all staff receive sufficient rest. This appendix should describe how shift handovers (or other handovers if people's roles will change during the response) will be managed. Information on additional payments to which staff may be entitled, and how to claim them may also be included either here or in a separate appendix – see Chapter 5, Section 5 b.
- k. **Debriefing methods.** It is important that, after the emergency, everyone has a chance to talk about their experience of the response. This is firstly so that they can work through any effects the experience may have had on them and secondly so that information can be gathered on how the response went, what worked and what didn't and whether the plan was an effective tool for responders. Personal debriefing and lesson-learning debriefing are separate processes and require facilitators with different skills. This appendix should set out what arrangements will be made for both and where it would be possible to get specialist assistance, if required.
- l. **Safety and staff health monitoring and counselling.** An emergency situation does not absolve an organisation, or its employees, from their obligations under health and safety legislation. This appendix should set out what steps will be taken to ensure the well-being of all staff, including provision of safety equipment, working hours arrangements, workload management systems and welfare and counselling arrangements. It should also specify what post-holder(s) will be responsible for overseeing the safety and welfare of staff, both during the emergency and afterwards.
- m. **Contractors' obligations for service provision in any emergency.** Many organisations rely on a range of contractors (from both the public and private sectors) to deliver services on their behalf. Where these services may be required in an emergency situation, there should be a contractual agreement, such as a contract, Service Level Agreement (SLA), Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or protocol, covering things such as response times, resources to be provided, roles and responsibilities and financial arrangements. Don't forget IT support, communications support, out-of-hours catering, cleaning and transport.
- n. **Emergency Communications Directory.** This is probably one of the most important parts of the plan, ranking alongside alerting mechanisms, action lists, key emergency contact numbers and communications facilities. In contrast to the initial call-out contact list in Appendix i, this appendix would detail the contact

















































