

1 **JOINT DOCTRINE:**

2 **The interoperability framework**

3 **Edition 3 (2021)**



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For consultation

70 1 Foreword

71 We are pleased to welcome you to the third edition of the “*Joint Doctrine: The interoperability*
72 *framework*”. This publication is the culmination of a thorough review carried out by a multi-agency
73 team drawn from local authorities, coastguard, police, fire, ambulance, the military, relevant national
74 training establishments and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat. It includes learning that has been
75 shared via the Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) online platform, as well as lessons from public
76 and independent inquiries, and reports to prevent future deaths.

77 An essential element in the hierarchy of guidance, the Joint Doctrine provides responders, across all
78 levels, at the scene or elsewhere, with generic guidance and principles on the actions to take when
79 responding to multi-agency incidents of any scale. It does not constitute a set of rules to be applied
80 without thought, but rather seeks to inform, explain and guide.

81 Accepting that responders work together across agencies on a daily basis, the Joint Doctrine offers a
82 framework on which we can build our joint response, by using commonly agreed models and
83 principles.

84 This publication is not a response plan in itself, but we encourage **all** responder organisations,
85 whether Category 1 or 2, or uncategorised, to reflect the contents of the Joint Doctrine within their
86 local plans, policies and procedures, encouraging use of the models and principles at all stages of
87 incident management from pre-planning through response and to recovery.

88 Furthermore, inclusion of the Joint Doctrine into local training, whether single or multi-agency,
89 specialist or non-specialist, is a critical factor in ensuring a coherent response and achieving the
90 JESIP aim of ‘*working together, saving lives, reducing harm*’.

91 We are extremely grateful to those individuals and their supporting organisations who have
92 contributed to the review of the Joint Doctrine. If you have any comments about the publication, or
93 any questions as to how you might act upon it, please email them to contact@jesip.org.uk

94

95 The Interoperability Board

96 2 Introduction to the Joint Doctrine

97 Civil resilience in the UK is underpinned by the [Civil Contingencies Act \(2004\)](#); however, the Act
98 should be viewed in the wider context of the almost universally adopted concept of Integrated
99 Emergency Management (IEM).

100 IEM is a structured, 'all hazards' approach to the management of any disruptive challenge, whatever
101 its cause, nature or consequence. It comprises six related activities:

- 102 • Anticipate
- 103 • Assess
- 104 • Prevent
- 105 • [Prepare](#)
- 106 • [Respond](#)
- 107 • [Recover](#)



108

109 Figure: Diagram showing the activities of Integrated Emergency Management

110 The underlying aim of IEM is to develop flexible and adaptable arrangements, which will enable an
111 effective response to and recovery from disruptive challenges. Importantly, under IEM, there should
112 be a focus on the consequences and wider impacts of emergencies, rather than on the causes.

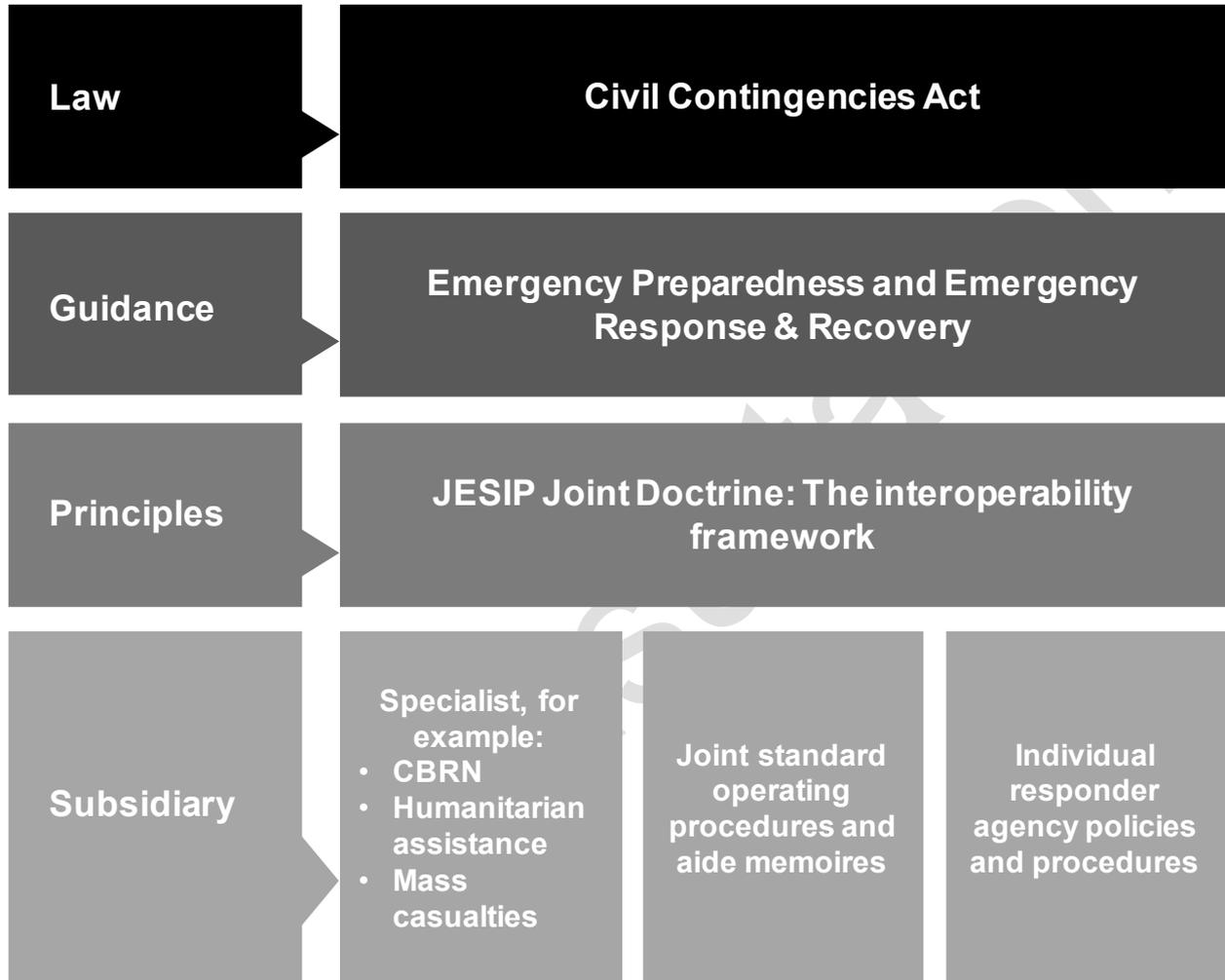
113 In order to be effective, the application of this Joint Doctrine needs to be similarly wide and not
114 restricted to use by 'blue light' responders during any of the phases.

115 All responders can use the JESIP principles to support any stage of IEM. In particular, the [Joint
116 Decision Model](#) (JDM) has enhanced value, by supporting decision-making outside of emergency
117 preparedness and incident response.

118 Similarly, other JESIP products describing [Principles for joint working](#), [Decision controls](#) and [Joint
119 understanding of risk](#) can further underpin these processes.

120 JESIP is the thread that should run through all plans and subsequent incidents, and recovery from
121 these. All incident phases need to consider multi-agency working, best served by following the JESIP
122 principles.

123 Separate publications set out the use of specialist capabilities as part of the tactical response for
124 specific circumstances, such as marauding terrorist attacks (MTA). These specialist response
125 publications reflect the generic guidance found in this Joint Doctrine.



126
127 Figure: Diagram showing the emergency response documentation hierarchy

128 **3 Preparation for application of the Joint Doctrine**

129 **3.1 People-centred approach**

130 Ultimately all incidents involve people; they might be the public we are serving or responders who are
131 providing that service. To achieve our overarching aim of '**working together, saving lives, reducing**
132 **harm**', we need to put people at the centre of the incident, from planning, through to response and
133 recovery.

134 We need to ensure our responders are prepared to the best of their ability for the incidents they may
135 be asked to attend. This preparation is not just in training them in knowledge and skills, but also to
136 ensure their wellbeing.

137 Organisations should have in place arrangements to grow and support the mental resilience of
138 responders before, during and after an incident. Responders who are mentally prepared and
139 supported will be better equipped to provide a suitable and effective response to the public.

140 **3.2 Joint training and exercises**

141 The delivery of training courses, which are aligned to the JESIP learning outcomes framework and
142 have a multi-agency attendance, are one of the critical success factors in building and maintaining an
143 interoperable response.

144 Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners are best placed to understand and identify those
145 organisations that should be included in the multi-agency training courses.

146 Individually, organisations should ensure their personnel, who are required to support the response to
147 an incident, are appropriately prepared and aware of the JESIP models and principles, and how they
148 are applied. To support this, everyone should receive a form of JESIP awareness annually. In
149 addition, individuals who are responsible for managing an incident at any level, should attend a multi-
150 agency JESIP training course, every three years as a minimum.

151 Another fundamental element of preparedness is the provision of objective-led exercises. LRFs plan
152 and facilitate numerous multi-agency exercises each year. These present opportunities for those
153 involved in the management and support of incidents, to practice the application of JESIP models and
154 principles. When designing exercises, it is imperative that all relevant responder agencies are
155 included, and that appropriate interoperability and single sector objectives are built into the exercise
156 design.

157 The use of UK military assets in support of civilian emergencies is well established. The Ministry of
158 Defence (MOD) has its own standing programme, referred to as mission rehearsal exercises (MRXs).
159 These are designed to assess the ability of Defence, primarily through the Army's network of
160 Regional Points of Command (RPoCs), to plan and conduct operations in support of the civil
161 authorities. It is also expected that the RPoCs, and the network of MOD Liaison Officers (LOs), will
162 seek out wider civil authority-led training opportunities, to enhance military awareness of JESIP. LRFs
163 should consider the inclusion of military participants in the planning and delivery of local exercises
164 where appropriate.

165 All lessons identified from exercises, which affect a multi-agency response, should be uploaded onto
166 [Joint Organisational Learning \(JOL\) Online](#). Locally, organisations should then implement change, to
167 reduce the risk of the lessons identified at exercises reoccurring during the response to an incident.

168 **3.3 Terminology**

169 It is recognised that some of the terminology contained in this publication may not be exactly as is
170 used by the various organisations across the UK. For example, the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs)
171 in England and Wales have counterparts in Scotland of local and regional resilience partnerships,
172 and in Northern Ireland they have emergency preparedness groups.

173 It is also recognised that roles and organisational structures vary within organisations, with some
174 having commanders, and others having managers. Preparedness for incidents should include gaining
175 a level of understanding about the other agencies and organisations that may be involved.

176 The importance of a common approach includes the need to ensure information is clear, concise and
177 can be readily understood by all agencies involved. The exchange of information is key in ensuring a
178 full appreciation of the situation and the circumstances of the incident or emergency.

179 Using terminology that either means different things to different people or is simply not understood
180 across different responder agencies, is a potential barrier to interoperability. Responder agencies
181 may not fully understand each other's call sign structures or single-service terminology, such as
182 informal references to assets. When sharing information or communicating with other agencies, plain
183 language that is free of abbreviations and jargon should be used. This ensures that the information
184 shared is clear and easily understood.

185 Some of the terms used in this publication are key to successful joint working and responders should
186 understand them. The [Lexicon of UK civil protection terminology](#) sets out definitions for common
187 terminology in emergency management, including important terms in interoperability. A set of
188 common map symbols provided by the [Civil Protection Common Map Symbology](#), has been
189 developed to promote interoperability between emergency responders.

190 Responder agencies should cross-reference definitions in their own organisation's documents and
191 adopt the common definitions contained from the Lexicon. Agreeing and using common terminology
192 is a building block for interoperability. If there is any doubt about what is meant by a specific term,
193 individuals should check and confirm whether a common understanding has been established.

194 **3.4 National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums**

195 The [National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums \(LRFs\)](#) is a set of individual
196 standards that are intended to establish a consistent and progressive means for LRFs and their
197 constituent local responder organisations to self-assure their capabilities and overall level of
198 readiness, and to guide continuous improvement against mandatory requirements, good and leading
199 practice.

200 The standards do not introduce any new duties on emergency responders. They set out expectations
201 of good and leading practice for LRFs, which build on and complement statutory duties under the
202 Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and other relevant legislation.

203 The standards have been developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and
204 Local Government, a range of other government departments and agencies, the devolved
205 administrations, the Emergency Planning College, the JESIP team and professional institutions.
206 Critically, they have been drafted and developed with local emergency responders, and as a result
207 they reflect a broadly-based and consensus view of 'what good looks like', and what LRFs should be
208 looking to implement, achieve and be able to demonstrate.

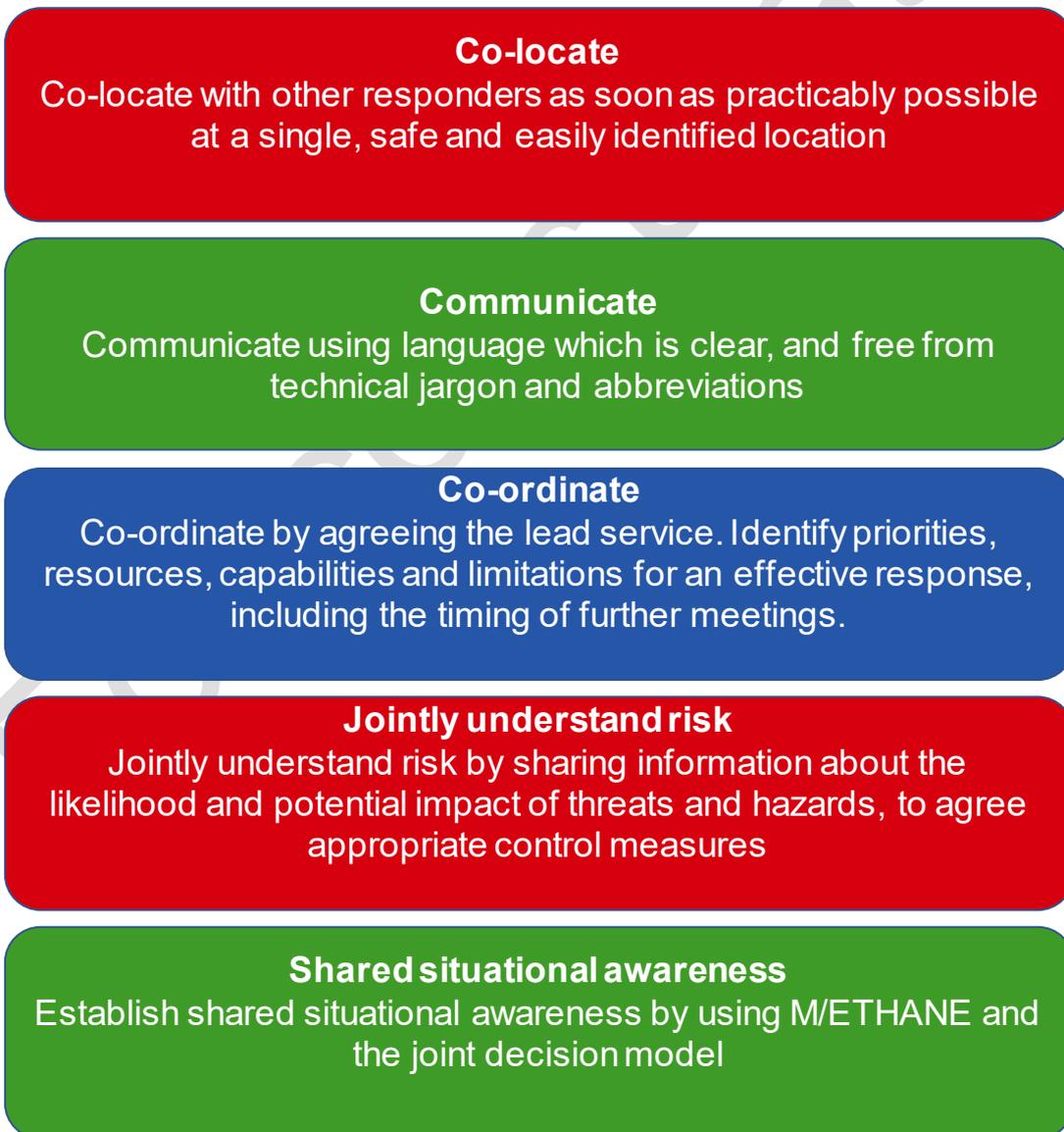
209 **4 Response using the Joint Doctrine**

210 **4.1 Principles for joint working**

211 The principles for joint working can be used during all phases of an incident, spontaneous or pre-
212 planned, regardless of scale. They support the development of a multi-agency response and provide
213 structure during the response to all incidents. The principles can also be applied during the recovery
214 phase.

Applying simple principles for joint working are particularly important in the early stages of an incident, when clear, robust decisions and actions need to be taken with minimum delay, often in a rapidly changing environment.

218 The principles illustrated in the diagram below are not a hierarchy, although they can be achieved
219 in this order.



220
221 Figure: Diagram showing the principles for joint working

222 4.2 Co-location

223 *Responders should make every effort to communicate with each other prior to co-*
224 *location, for example by using interoperable voice communications.*

225 There are many benefits of co-location, such as improved communication and understanding that
226 support joint working. With the use of technology, co-location can be virtual; this may be particularly
227 beneficial for incidents that involve a regional or national response or are protracted events.

228 Control rooms operate from separate fixed locations and cannot physically co-locate. They can,
229 however, help in co-locating responders and commanders by jointly agreeing the initial multi-agency
230 rendezvous points.

231 *The co-location of responders should occur as soon as reasonably practicable.*

232 The COVID-19 response demonstrated that command can be exercised effectively remotely, but
233 physical co-location should remain the default solution. When responders are co-located, they can
234 perform the functions of command, control and co-ordination face-to-face most effectively. At the
235 higher level this is achieved at the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) and Tactical Co-ordinating
236 Group (TCG), whilst at the operational level the focal point is the rendezvous point (RVP) or Forward
237 Command Point (FCP), which will be decided by control in the initial stages and reviewed by
238 responders when at the scene.

239 Co-location supports responders to jointly agree objectives and a co-ordinated plan to effectively
240 resolve an incident.

241 The benefits of co-location apply equally at all levels of response.

242 *If there is any delay in responders co-locating, interoperable communications*
243 *should be used to begin establishing shared situational awareness.*

244 The operational and tactical commanders of each service should be easily identifiable at an incident.
245 This is usually achieved by wearing role specific tabards. There are exceptions, such as at public
246 order and other specialist incidents where coloured epaulettes and helmet markings are used. See
247 [JESIP: Commander identification tabards](#) for more information.

248 Although not all responders will have role-specific tabards, they should wear appropriate personal
249 protective equipment (PPE) and have a form of identification as a minimum.

250 4.3 Communication

251 Meaningful and effective communication between responders and responder agencies underpins
252 effective joint working. Communication links start from the time of the first call or contact, instigating
253 communication between control rooms as soon as possible to start the process of sharing

254 information. The 'talk not tell' process involves control room personnel passing information and
255 asking other responders what their response to the incident will be.

256 This is achieved by:

- 257 a) Sharing information from all available sources along with immediate resource availability and
258 decisions taken in accordance with each organisation's policies and procedures
- 259 b) Nominating a point of contact in each control room and establishing a method of
260 communication between all of them; this should be achieved by using the most appropriate
261 form of communication
- 262 c) Co-ordinating the setting up of multi-agency interoperable voice communications for
263 responders and operational working if necessary

264 *People should start from a position of considering the risks and harm if they do not*
265 *share information*

266 Sharing information in a way that can be understood by the intended recipient aids the
267 development of shared situational awareness, which underpins the best possible outcomes of
268 an incident.

269 The following supports successful communication between responders and responder agencies:

- 270 • Exchanging reliable and accurate information, such as critical information about hazards,
271 risks and threats
- 272 • Ensuring the information shared is free from acronyms and other potential sources of
273 confusion
- 274 • Understanding of the responsibilities, capabilities and limitations of each of
275 the responder agencies involved
- 276 • Clarifying that information shared, including terminology and symbols, is understood
277 and agreed by all involved in the response

278 At multi-agency incidents, responders use interoperability 'talk groups', which are held by the
279 emergency services. The use of these 'talk groups' are usually assigned to key roles, for example,
280 incident commanders. Where appropriate, Defence responders and other non-blue light agencies
281 involved should be included.

282 **4.4 Co-ordination**

283 Control rooms should engage in multi-agency communications at the earliest opportunity in order to
284 carry out the initial actions required to manage the incident.

285 Co-ordination involves all control rooms and on-scene responders discussing resources and the
286 activities of each responder agency, agreeing priorities and making joint decisions throughout the
287 incident. Co-ordination underpins joint working by avoiding potential conflicts, preventing duplication
288 of effort and minimising risk.

289 Control rooms should ensure that initial actions required to manage the incident are carried out,
290 including engaging in multi-agency communications. They will continue to respond to any actions that

291 may arise during the incident and maintain communications with on-scene responders, as well as
292 other agencies, to ensure they consistently achieve effective co-ordination.

293 For effective co-ordination, one agency generally needs to take a lead role. If military assistance is
294 required, Defence will assume a supporting role. At all levels, when deployed in support of the civil
295 authorities, Defence personnel will be responsible for identifying themselves at the earliest
296 opportunity to the senior civil authority commander or co-ordinator and should establish effective co-
297 ordination with them to ensure tasks are allocated appropriately.

298 To decide who the lead agency should be, factors such as the phase of the incident, the need for
299 specialist capabilities and investigation, during both the response and recovery phases should be
300 considered. There is specific guidance for some types of incidents, highlighting which agency should
301 take the lead role. The decision on who takes the lead role should be recorded, as should any
302 changes to the lead agency as the incident develops.

303 The lead agency should chair and set the frequency of co-ordinating meetings.

304 **4.5 Joint understanding of risk**

305 Different responder agencies may see, understand and treat risks differently.

306 Each agency should carry out their own risk assessments, then share the results so that they can
307 plan control measures and contingencies together more effectively. Individual dynamic risk
308 assessment findings may be used to develop the analytical risk assessment for the incident.

309 This process applies if military assets are taking tactical direction from civil authorities, while
310 remaining under military command. However, this does not absolve military commanders from their
311 own assessment of the risks; indeed, risk should be assessed and agreed through the Defence duty
312 holder chain of command rather than the operational chain of command.

313 By jointly understanding risks and the associated mitigating actions, organisations can promote the
314 safety of responders and reduce the impact that risks may have on members of the public,
315 infrastructure and the environment.

316 **4.6 Shared situational awareness**

317 'Shared situational awareness' is a common understanding of the circumstances, immediate
318 consequences and implications of the emergency, along with an appreciation of the available
319 capabilities and the priorities of the responder agencies.

320 Achieving shared situational awareness is essential for effective interoperability. Establishing shared
321 situational awareness is important for developing a [Common Operating Picture](#) (COP) at all levels of
322 command, between incident commanders and between control rooms.

323 Communications between control rooms greatly assists the creation of shared situational awareness
324 in the initial stages and throughout the incident. Talking to commanders before they arrive on-scene
325 and throughout the incident, will contribute to shared situational awareness. The process should
326 include identifying risks and hazards to all responders.

327 Discussion between control rooms should be frequent and cover the following key points:

- 328 • Is it clear who the lead agency is at this point? If so, who is it?

- 329 • What information and intelligence does each agency hold at this point?
- 330 • What hazards and risks are known by each agency at this point?
- 331 • What assets have been, or are being, deployed at this point and why?
- 332 • How will the required agencies continue communicating with each other?
- 333 • At what point will multi-agency interoperable voice communications be required, and how
- 334 will it be achieved?

335 Whenever possible, control rooms should use electronic data transfer to share information. This can
336 reduce congestion on voice channels, prevent misunderstandings and eliminate 'double-keying'
337 information.

338 Direct data transfer does not, however, remove the need to establish early dialogue between control
339 room supervisors to achieve shared situational awareness.

340 As an incident progresses consideration should be given to ensuring that all responder agencies who
341 are appropriate to the incident are included within the command and control processes, especially
342 command meetings.

343 For further information refer to:

- 344 • Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Control room supervision role and responsibilities](#)

For Consultation

345 **5 The early stages of response to a multi-agency or major incident**

346 Recognising that an incident will involve working with other responder agencies is very important.
347 The earlier other responder agencies are notified of the incident, the sooner joint working
348 arrangements can be agreed and put into place. Control rooms should think not only of their own
349 services response requirements, but of other agencies that need to be alerted to the incident.

350 For incidents with multiple sites, or an incident that initially appears to be a number of separate
351 incidents, emergency service control rooms are best placed to recognise that a multi-agency or major
352 incident may be in progress.

353 In other cases, first responders may recognise the nature of an incident and the need for a multi-
354 agency response. In either case, this must be shared with other agencies via control rooms.

355 During the early stages of an incident it takes time for operational structures, resources and protocols
356 to be put in place. This is likely to put initial responders and control rooms under considerable
357 pressure. Some of the required information may not be available, and commanders may have
358 insufficient resources to deal with the incident.

359 In order to help all agencies gather initial information about an incident in a consistent manner, a
360 common approach is required. The [M/ETHANE model](#) brings structure and clarity to the initial stages
361 of managing any multi-agency or major incident.

362 The [Cabinet Office Lexicon of civil protection terminology](#) defines a major incident as:

363 *An event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special*
364 *arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency.*

365 Declaring a major incident triggers a predetermined response from each emergency service and
366 other responder agencies. It takes time for operational structures, resources and protocols to be put
367 in place. Declaring that a major incident is in progress as soon as possible means these
368 arrangements can be put in place quickly.

369 *The declaration of a major incident must be shared with other agencies without*
370 *delay.*

371 Declaration of a major incident should include sharing a M/ETHANE message from the scene and
372 opening lines of communication between control rooms.

373 **6 Using the M/ETHANE model during incident response**

374 The M/ETHANE model is an established reporting framework which provides a common structure for
 375 responders and their control rooms to share incident information.

376 It is recommended that this format can be used for all incidents and be updated as the incident
 377 develops.

378 **For incidents falling below the major incident threshold M/ETHANE becomes an ‘ETHANE’**
 379 **message.** During the decision-making process using the [Joint Decision Model](#), there should be
 380 periodic consideration of the ‘M’ (representing ‘major incident’) by responders, to establish whether a
 381 developing incident goes above the major incident threshold.

382 Each responder agency should send a M/ETHANE message to their control room who should then
 383 share with other control rooms as soon as possible. The first resources to arrive on scene should
 384 consider their own safety and send the M/ETHANE message so that situational awareness can be
 385 established quickly. The information received through multiple M/ETHANE messages will gradually
 386 build to support shared situational awareness in those responding to the incident and between control
 387 rooms.

388

M	Major incident	Has a major incident or standby been declared? Yes/No If no, complete ETHANE message	Include the date and time of any declaration
E	Exact location	What is the exact location or geographical area of the incident?	Be as precise as possible, using a system that will be understood by all responders
T	Type of incident	What type of incident is it?	For example, flooding, fire, utility failure, outbreak of disease
H	Hazards	What hazards or potential hazards can be identified?	Consider the likelihood of a hazard and the potential severity of any impact
A	Access	What are the best routes for access and egress?	Include information on inaccessible routes and rendezvous points (RVPs). Remember that agencies need to leave the scene, as well as access it.

N	Number of casualties	How many casualties are there, and what condition are they in?	Use an agreed classification system, such as P1, P2, P3 and dead
E	Emergency responders	Which, and how many, responder assets and personnel are required or already on-scene?	Consider whether the assets of wider emergency responders may be required, such as local authorities or the voluntary sector

389 **7 Response using a Common Operating Picture**

390 A Common Operating Picture (COP) has been defined as:

391 *A common overview of an incident that is created by assessing and fusing*
 392 *information from multiple sources, and is shared between appropriate command,*
 393 *control and co-ordinating groups to support joint decision-making.*

394 A COP is a single point of reference for those involved and supports joint decision-making.
 395 Answering the questions below helps develop a COP and helps establish shared situational
 396 awareness:

- 397 • What? Gather information about what has happened, what is happening now and what
 398 is being done about it?
- 399 • So what? What might the implications and wider impacts be?
- 400 • What might happen in the future?

401 The form of the COP depends on local requirements and practices. It should be updated as events
 402 and inputs change, and as the results of further work become available, such as analysis which
 403 answers the 'so what?' or 'what might?' questions.

404 As part of this process, decision makers may need further support, skills and resources so they can
 405 assess and interpret the information they receive appropriately, before it influences the decisions they
 406 make.

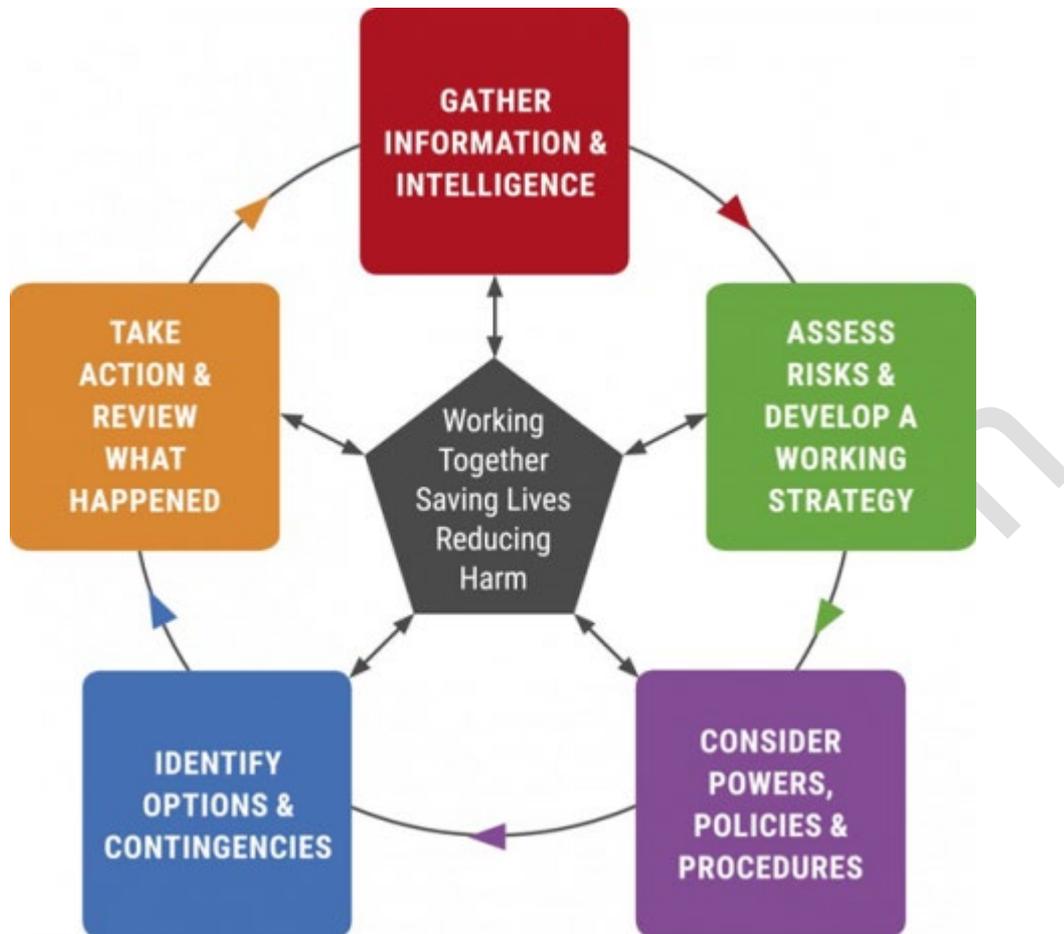
407 The COP should have a clear relationship with established command, control and co-ordination
 408 groups and should be accessed through a suitably resilient and secure common information sharing
 409 platform.

410 This completed [Strategic Co-ordinating Group situation report \(SITREP\)](#) is an example of a COP. In
 411 other contexts, the COP may be a dynamic dashboard that provides an overview of the incident,
 412 using maps and graphics as well as text.

413 **7.1 Joint Decision Model**

414 One of the difficulties facing responders is how to bring together the available information, reconcile
 415 potentially differing priorities and then make effective decisions together. The Joint Decision Model
 416 (JDM) was developed to resolve this issue.

417 The JDM is designed to help make effective decisions together. As they establish shared situational
 418 awareness, they can develop a COP.



419

420 Figure: Diagram of the Joint Decision Model

421 Responder agencies may use various supporting processes and sources to provide information,
 422 including any planned intentions; this supports joint decision-making.

423 All decisions, the rationale behind them and subsequent actions, should be recorded in a joint
 424 decision log.

425 *Recording of decisions is critical and where possible should be undertaken by a*
 426 *trained loggist.*

427 When using the JDM, the priority is to gather and assess information and intelligence. Responders
 428 should work together to build shared situational awareness, recognising that this requires continuous
 429 effort as the situation, and responders' understanding, will change over time. Understanding the risks
 430 is vital in establishing shared situational awareness, as it enables responders to answer the three
 431 fundamental questions of 'what, so what and what might?'

432 Once the process of building shared situational awareness has begun, the desired outcomes should
 433 be agreed as the central part of a joint [working strategy](#). A working strategy should set out what a
 434 team is trying to achieve, and how they are going to achieve it.

435 If a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) is convened, they will agree and share the joint strategy for
 436 the multi-agency response. The strategic command teams from each agency should then review and

437 amend their single-agency strategy to be consistent with the joint strategy and support them in
438 achieving the jointly defined outcomes, or overarching aim.

439 Deciding how all agencies will work towards the desired outcomes reflects the available capabilities,
440 powers, policies and procedures (means) and the arising options, constraints and contingencies
441 (ways). Ways and means are closely related – some options will not be viable because they cannot
442 be implemented, or they may be technically and logistically feasible, but illegal or ethically
443 indefensible. These should still be logged with rationale as to why they were not achievable,

444 The JDM helps responders explore these considerations and sets out the various stages of reaching
445 joint decisions.

One of the guiding principles of the Joint Decision Model is that decision makers should use their professional judgement and experience in deciding any additional questions to ask and considerations to take into account, so that they can reach a jointly agreed decision.

450 Responders should be free to interpret the JDM for themselves, reasonably and according to the
451 circumstances they face at any given time. Achieving desired outcomes should always come before
452 strict adherence to the stepped process outlined in the JDM, particularly in time sensitive situations.

453 A detailed and well-practised understanding of the JDM will help responders to think clearly and in an
454 ordered way when under stress. The JDM can be used for both ‘rapid onset’ and ‘rising tide’
455 emergencies.

Doing nothing or delaying action is a risk and has potential life-threatening consequences.

458 The following sections summarise the questions and considerations that responders should think
459 about when they use the JDM.

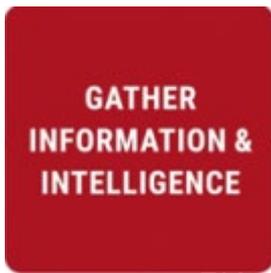
460 7.2 Working together, saving lives, reducing harm



The pentagon at the centre of the JDM reminds responders that all joint decisions should be made with reference to the overarching or primary aim of any response to an emergency – to save lives and reduce harm.

This should be the most important consideration throughout the decision-making process.

466 7.3 Gather information and intelligence



This stage involves gathering and sharing information and intelligence to establish shared situational awareness. At any incident, no single responder agency can appreciate all the relevant dimensions of an emergency straight away.

Information refers to all forms of information obtained, recorded or processed.

Intelligence is obtained from information that has been subject to:

- 473 • Evaluation, to determine its significance
- 474 • Risk assessment, to determine the need for it to be acted on
- 475 • Analysis, to identify critical links and associations that assist understanding of the incident

476 *Responder agencies should consider and not discount sources of local or specialist*
477 *knowledge, as they may be able to provide information about the incident or the*
478 *location.*

479 A deeper and wider understanding will only come from meaningful communication between
480 responder agencies. Responders should not assume that others will see things, or say things, in the
481 same way.

482 There may need to be a sustained effort to reach a common view and understanding of events, risks
483 and their implications,

484 Decision-making in the context of an emergency, including decisions on sharing information, does not
485 remove the statutory obligations of agencies or individuals. Decisions should be made with an
486 overriding priority of saving lives and reducing harm.

487 Anyone providing sensitive information should also provide an understanding about how it can be
488 used, shared and stored.

489 [M/ETHANE](#) is a structured and consistent model for responder agencies to collate and pass on
490 information about an incident.

491 7.4 Assess risks and develop a working strategy



Responders jointly assess risk to achieve and maintain a common understanding of threats and hazards, and the likelihood of them being realised. This informs decisions on deployments and the required risk control measures.

They should consider how risks may increase, reduce or be controlled by any decisions made and subsequent actions taken. At any incident, each responder agency will have a unique insight into those risks.

499 By sharing what they know, responders can establish a COP; this allows for informed decision-
500 making on deployments and the risk control measures required. Time critical tasks should not be
501 delayed by this process.

502 The risk control measures to be employed by individual services must also be understood by other
 503 responder agencies, to ensure any potential unintended consequences are identified before activity
 504 commences. This increases the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the response as well as
 505 the probability of a successful incident resolution.

506 *The working strategy is the direction and intent that responders develop and agree*
 507 *together. They should consider the need for immediate action to save lives and*
 508 *reduce harm.*

509 It is rare for a complete or perfect picture to exist for a rapid onset incident. The working strategy
 510 should therefore be based on the information available and reviewed on a continual basis.

511 When developing a working strategy, responders should:

- 512 • Apply decision controls
- 513 • Share single service risk assessments
- 514 • Record and agree the joint assessment of risk, in a suitable format

515 When developing a working strategy, responders should consider these questions:

- 516 • **What:** Are the aims and objectives?
- 517 • **Who by:** Police, fire and rescue service, ambulance service, other organisations?
- 518 • **When:** Timescales, deadlines and milestones?
- 519 • **Where:** Locations?
- 520 • **Why:** What is the rationale? Is it consistent with the overall strategic aims and objectives?
- 521 • **How:** Will these tasks be achieved?

522 For an effective integrated multi-agency operational response plan, objectives and priorities must be
 523 agreed jointly. Each agency will then prioritise their plans and activity.

524 The following key steps should be undertaken:

Identify hazards	This begins with the initial call to a control room and continues as first responders arrive on scene. Information gathered by individual agencies should be disseminated to all first responders, control rooms and partner agencies effectively.
Carry out a dynamic risk assessment (DRA)	Individual agencies carry out dynamic risk assessments, reflecting the tasks and objectives to be achieved, the hazards identified and the likelihood of harm from those hazards. The results should then be shared with all agencies involved.
Identify tasks	Each individual agency should identify and consider their specific tasks, according to their role and responsibilities. These tasks should then be assessed in the context of the incident.
Apply risk control measures	Each agency should consider and apply appropriate control measures to ensure any risk is as low as reasonably practicable. The hierarchy of control should be considered when agreeing a co-ordinated control measure approach: Elimination, substitution,

	engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective clothing and equipment.
Have an integrated multi-agency operational response plan	The outcomes of the hazard assessments and risk assessments should be considered when developing this plan, within the context of the agreed priorities for the incident. If the activity of one agency creates hazards for a partner agency, a solution must be implemented to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable.
Record decisions	The outcomes of the joint assessment of risk should be recorded, together with the jointly agreed priorities and the agreed multi-agency response plan, when resources permit. This may not be possible in the early stages of the incident, but post-incident scrutiny focuses on the earliest decision-making.

525

526 **7.5 Consider powers, policies and procedures**



This stage relates to any relevant laws, procedures or policies that may impact on the response plan and the capabilities available to be deployed.

Decision-making in an emergency will focus on achieving the desired outcomes. Various constraints and considerations will shape how this is achieved.

532
533

Power, policies and procedures may affect how individual agencies operate and co-operate to achieve the agreed aims and objectives.

534
535
536

A common understanding of relevant powers, policies and procedures is essential, to ensure that the activities of responder agencies complement rather than compromise each other.

537 **7.6 Identify options and contingencies**

538 There will almost always be more than one way to achieve the desired outcomes. Responders should
539 work together to rigorously evaluate the range of options and contingencies.



Potential options or courses of action should be evaluated, considering:

- Suitability Does it fit with the strategic direction?
- Feasibility Can it be done with the available resources?
- Acceptability Is it legal, morally defensible and justifiable?

544
545
546

Whichever options are chosen, it is essential that responders are clear on what they need to carry out. Procedures for communicating any decision to defer, abort or initiate a specific tactic should also be clearly agreed.

547 Contingency arrangements should be put in place to address reasonably foreseeable events that
548 may occur as a result of action taken or not taken. For example, strong evidence may suggest that an
549 emergency is being managed appropriately and the impacts controlled in line with current risk

550 assessments, but there remains a potential that the situation could deteriorate and have a significant
551 impact. If changes do occur, it is essential that these are shared between responders to maintain a
552 joint understanding of risk.

553 **7.7 Decision controls**

554 Decision-making in incident management should be a continuous process that follows a general
555 pattern of:

- 556 a) Working out what is going on (situation)
- 557 b) Establishing what your objectives are and what you need to achieve (direction)
- 558 c) Deciding what to do about it (action), all informed by a statement and understanding of
559 overarching values and purpose, including which agencies are required

560 Decision-making can be time critical. As part of the decision-making process, decision makers should
561 use decision controls to ensure that the proposed action is the most appropriate.

562 Decision controls support and validate the decision-making process. They encourage reflection and
563 set out a series of points to consider before making a decision.

564 Note that points (a) to (d) are intended to structure a joint consideration of the issues, with (e)
565 suggesting some considerations for individual reflection.

a) Why are we doing this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What goals are linked to this decision?• What is the rationale, and is that jointly agreed?• Does it support working together, saving lives, reducing harm?
b) What do we think will happen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the likely outcome of the action; in particular, what is the impact on the objective and other activities?• How will the incident change as a result of these actions, what outcomes do we expect?
c) In light of these considerations, is the benefit proportional to the risk?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do the benefits of proposed actions justify the risks that would be accepted?

<p>d) Do we have a common understanding and position on:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The situation, its likely consequences and potential outcomes? • The available information, critical uncertainties and key assumptions? • Terminology and measures being used by all those involved in the response? • Individual agency working practices related to a joint response? • Conclusions drawn and communications made?
<p>e) As an individual:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the collective decision in line with my professional judgement and experience? • Have we, as individuals and as a team, reviewed the decision with critical rigour? • Are we, as individuals and as a team, content that this decision is the most practicable solution?

566

567 Once the decision makers are collectively and individually satisfied that the decision controls validate
568 the proposed actions, these actions should be implemented.

569 As the JDM is a continuous loop, it is essential that the results of these actions are fed back into the
570 first box, *'Gather and share information and intelligence'*, which sets out the need to establish and
571 sustain shared situational awareness. This will, in turn, shape any change in direction or risk
572 assessment as the cycle continues.

573 **7.8 Briefing**

574 Once decisions have been made and actions agreed, information should be relayed in a structured
575 way that can be easily understood by those who will carry out actions or support activities. This is
576 commonly known as briefing.

577 In the initial phases of an incident, the JDM may be used to structure a briefing. As incidents develop
578 past the initial phases, or if they are protracted and require a handover of responsibility, then a more
579 detailed briefing tool should be used. The mnemonic 'IIMARCH' is a commonly used briefing tool.

580 Using the IIMARCH headings shown below as a guide, information can be briefed in appropriate
581 detail:

- I** INFORMATION
- I** INTENT
- M** METHOD
- A** ADMINISTRATION

- R** RISK ASSESSMENT
- C** COMMUNICATIONS
- H** HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

582

583 Further information on this briefing tool are provided in the [JESIP IIMARCH template](#).

584 **7.9 Take action and review what happened**



591

Building shared situational awareness, setting direction, evaluating options and making decisions all lead to taking the actions that are judged to be the most effective and efficient in resolving an emergency and returning to a new normality.

Actions should be reviewed. As information or intelligence becomes available or changes during the incident, responders should use the JDM to inform their decision-making until the incident is resolved.

For Consultation

592 **8 Decision-making: Support, skills and resources**

593 The following section provides background information and some suggested methods to support
594 decision-making.

595 In many incidents there will not be a need, or any time, for formal arrangements to be set up to
596 support decision makers. But some incidents will be highly complex and strategically significant,
597 involve considerable levels of uncertainty, have hard-to-predict consequences and unclear choices.

598 In these circumstances, it will be necessary to implement pre-established arrangements to manage
599 information and support multi-agency decision-making at tactical and strategic levels.

600 **8.1 Assessing and managing information**

601 *Regulations are in place about the sharing of data; however, this should not prevent*
602 *responders sharing relevant information in order to save lives and reduce harm.*

603 This section outlines the capabilities that responder agencies should establish to inform and support
604 joint decision-making. It covers the need to:

- 605 • Assess information
- 606 • Have common processes to report, assess and manage information consistently
- 607 • Have a common information sharing platform, so that information can be shared and applied

608 **8.2 Information assessment**

609 Assessing the information received, using proven criteria, will establish its quality and suitability for
610 the task in hand. This is critical to ensure that decision-making is based on the best possible
611 information and to identify where critical uncertainties lie.

612 In an emergency or crisis, much of the information decision makers receive will be unreliable or of
613 uncertain quality.

614 For that reason, a framework is needed to distinguish between:

- 615 • Information that can be relied on with confidence
- 616 • Information that is unreliable in some way
- 617 • Information of unknown quality

618 There are many ways in which responder agencies can assess information. If agencies use the
619 same information assessment framework, interoperability will be enhanced.

620 As a minimum, information should be assessed for:

- 621 • **Relevance:** In the current situation, how well does the information meet the needs of the end
622 user?
- 623 • **Accuracy:** How well does the information reflect the underlying reality?
- 624 • **Timeliness:** How current is the information?

625 • **Source reliability:** Does previous experience of this source indicate the likely quality of the
626 information?

627 • **Credibility:** Is the information supported or contradicted by other information?

628 As they develop a [Common Operating Picture](#) (COP), decision makers need to work together, using
629 their joint experience and judgement, when using an information assessment framework. This will
630 ensure the information they are using is both suitable and adequate.

631 If decision makers are concerned or dissatisfied with the information assessment, they should issue
632 clear direction and take steps to update, reconcile and check the information, or to seek further
633 information, potentially drawing on other channels and sources.

634 The behaviour of individuals and teams, and the effectiveness of interaction, will either enable or
635 impede them in developing shared situational awareness. Achieving shared situational awareness is
636 more likely if people:

637 • Share what they know freely

638 • Make uncertainties and assumptions absolutely clear

639 • Challenge their own understanding of what they are being told, and challenge the
640 understanding of others

641 • Are critical and rigorous

642 **8.3 Common processes for using information**

643 An organisation responding to a crisis or incident should:

644 a) Gather relevant information about the incident

645 b) Evaluate that information in terms of quality and relevance

646 c) Filter, analyse and make sense of that information

647 d) Communicate the information inside their organisation, and inform other relevant agencies

648 e) Present the information to decision makers in an appropriate form

649 Interoperability will be enhanced if emergency responders use consistent ways of working to carry
650 out these tasks.

651 **8.4 Common information sharing platform**

652 A common information sharing platform is the means to share and manage information
653 collaboratively to support joint decision-making. Any commonly understood, effective system can be
654 described as a common information sharing platform.

655 There are considerable advantages to using an electronic system. For example, automating aspects
656 of sourcing, combining, analysing and displaying data will be much more useful and efficient for those
657 using the data collected.

658 The precise form of a common information sharing platform will reflect local requirements and
659 existing capabilities, but responder organisations should consider [ResilienceDirect](#), a widely-used
660 and secure platform with a range of functions to support joint working. ResilienceDirect is provided to
661 all responder agencies by the government.

662 Consideration should be given to organisations that are unable to access the required information on
663 ResilienceDirect, by using alternative ways to share common information with them.

664 **8.5 Recording decisions**

665 All decisions, including the rationale behind them and action to be taken, should be recorded in an
666 appropriate format. While each organisation should maintain its own records, there may be a local
667 agreement to have a joint decision log.

668 If decisions and relevant supporting information are not recorded in an appropriate way, it is difficult
669 to prove and justify actions that have been taken. Legal cases are often focused on the recording of
670 information, especially key decisions.

671 As an absolute minimum, decision logs should contain the:

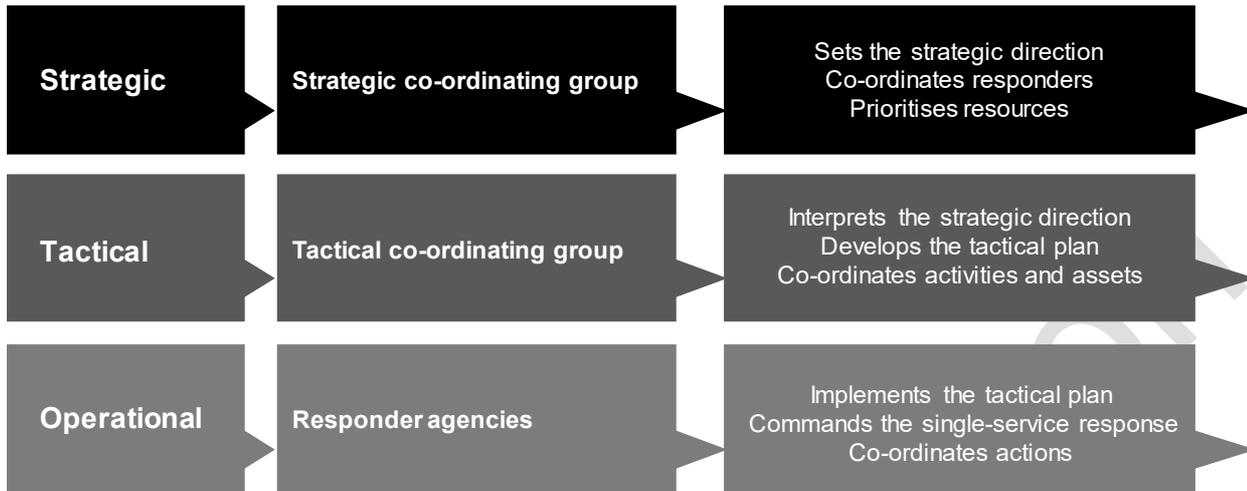
- 672 • Decision – what decision has been made?
- 673 • Rationale – what is the rationale behind this decision, including consideration of other
674 options?
- 675 • Action – what action is required to implement the decision, by whom and by when?
- 676 • Date and time the decision was made

677

For Consultation

678 **9 Response structure**

679 Emergency responders adopt levels of command when responding to incidents. The level does not
680 convey seniority or rank, but the role an individual has at the incident.



681

682 Figure: Diagram showing the generic response structure and basic responsibilities

683 This publication refers only to the generic response structure and not the specific functional activities
684 of individual organisations.

685 There should be a clear and identifiable commander or representative who is responsible for co-
686 ordinating the activity of their agency at each level of command.

687 **9.1 Military command**

688 The military command structure differs to the civilian structure:

689 Civilian: Strategic – Tactical - Operational

690 Military: Strategic – Operational – Tactical

691 While not a categorised responder, where it is appropriate to do so a Ministry of Defence (MOD)
692 Liaison Officer will be expected to attend the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG). Defence may also
693 be represented at the Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG).

694 **9.2 First responders on scene**

695 In the early stages of an incident, first responders at scene are likely to be in the best position to
696 assess the scale of any incident and potential need for a wider response. At this point, they are likely
697 to take the role of on-scene commander.

698 It is important that all individuals who could be first on scene of an incident, are empowered to
699 declare a major incident for their organisation and understand the implications of declaring or not
700 declaring one. They should also be able convey incident information using the [M/ETHANE model](#).
701 Declaring a major incident begins the process of activating relevant plans.

702 **9.3 Operational**

703 Operational commanders will be working with colleagues from other responder agencies. This will
704 most likely be at, or close to, the scene of the incident.

705 They will control and deploy the resources of their respective organisation within a functional or
706 geographical area, and will implement the tactical plan as directed by the tactical commander.

707 Clear communications should be established and maintained so that individuals can work together in
708 a co-ordinated way.

709 For further information refer to:

- 710 • Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Operational command role and responsibilities](#)

711 **9.4 Tactical**

712 In the initial stages of an incident, first responders are responsible for tactics. Once the scale and
713 nature of the incident is known, emergency services will appoint officers to act as tactical
714 commanders for their organisation. Other responder agencies may also appoint individuals to act as
715 tactical commanders or co-ordinators on behalf of their organisations where relevant.

716 Communication and co-ordination between responders is critical. Those working at the tactical level
717 should be co-located at a mutually agreed location where they can maintain effective joint command
718 of the operation. This includes effective joint working with other services, and other factors such as
719 access to communications systems.

720 The fire and rescue service tactical commander will be located at the scene. Once the Tactical Co-
721 ordinating Group is formed, either the incident commander or a nominated member of the incident
722 command team will attend.

723 Where circumstances hinder co-location of responders at any level, arrangements for robust
724 communications should be implemented, by using interoperable communications. The early
725 identification and use of specialists, such as operational communications advisers, is essential to
726 ensure an effective communication plan for the incident.

727 The tactical commander is likely to be in place before the strategic commander and to be the first
728 senior officer taking command of the incident. In the early stages of an incident, the tactical
729 commander is likely to set priorities before the strategic commander has set a strategy.

730 For further information refer to:

- 731 • Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Tactical command role and responsibilities](#)

732 **9.5 Strategic**

733 The strategic commander from each agency has overall authority on behalf of their agency. They are
734 responsible for the resources of their own agency and for formulating their single agency strategy for
735 the incident.

736 Each strategic commander may delegate decisions to their respective tactical commanders.

737 At the earliest opportunity, a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) (in England, Wales and Northern
738 Ireland) will determine or confirm a specific response strategy and record a strategy statement. In

739 Scotland, an SCG is established in response to nuclear or terrorist incidents; for other incident types,
740 strategic co-ordination is through regional resilience partnerships (RRP).

741 For further information refer to:

- 742 • Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Strategic command role and responsibilities](#)
- 743 • Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Strategic Co-ordinating Group role and responsibilities](#)

744 To minimise the consequences of the developing incident as far as is reasonably practicable, the
745 structures and responsibilities detailed above should be activated and put into place as quickly as
746 possible. It is acknowledged this is likely to take some time and therefore the first responders and
747 operational commanders at a scene should identify and implement the initial tactics, while also
748 communicating the need for support.

749 **9.6 Use of specialist resources**

750 If personnel are assigned to assist another agency, they should only be given tasks they are trained
751 and equipped for, and they should not supplement the other agency in a way that is potentially
752 dangerous to themselves, other responders or the public.

753 The attendance of tactical advisers (TacAds) should be considered; they are trained and recognised
754 specialists, who can provide advice on operational capabilities, limitations and capacity. A TacAd has
755 in-depth knowledge from a business and organisational perspective, which can significantly enhance
756 the outcome of an incident.

757 Examples of TacAd specialisms include:

- 758 • Public order and public safety
- 759 • National Inter-agency Liaison Officer (NILO)
- 760 • Urban search and rescue (USAR)
- 761 • Flood response
- 762 • Hazardous materials
- 763 • CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear)
- 764 • Communications

765 TacAds should ensure that they understand the aims and objectives of the response to the incident;
766 any advice they provide should be assessed against these by the intended recipient. A record should
767 be kept of the advice offered and whether it was followed or not, including the reasons why.

768 Trained loggists can provide the critical role of recording decisions made, including the rationale and
769 any subsequent actions.

770 **9.7 The Multi-Agency Information Cell**

771 It is critical on the build up to and during an incident that decision makers know what is happening
772 and have one source of information to work with. Having the same 'picture' allows shared situational
773 awareness in a complex and ever-changing incident. The Multi-Agency Information Cell (MAIC) can
774 provide that capability, across tactical and strategic levels, for all organisations involved in the
775 incident.

776 The purpose of the MAIC is to provide situational awareness by gathering information, analysing and
777 then delivering it in an intelligible and recognised product, referred to as the [Common Operating](#)
778 [Picture](#) (COP). It is essential that the COP is made as widely available as possible to those involved
779 in the incident and especially the Strategic Co-ordinating Groups (SCGs) and Tactical Co-ordinating
780 Groups (TCGs). Collating and sharing any product in the most timely and efficient method is key to
781 ensuring a successful outcome for the MAIC.

782 A MAIC can be a physical or virtual cell, working to an established battle rhythm and regarded as the
783 'hub of the wheel', with information spokes travelling to and from incident cells, partners, the
784 Government and many other stakeholders. Additionally, it may be tasked with specific deliverables
785 relevant to the ongoing situation.

786 The first consideration when applying the [Joint Decision Model](#) (JDM) is to [gather information and](#)
787 [intelligence](#). The ability to undertake this task initially and then as the emergency response continues,
788 will have a very significant impact on the effectiveness of the response. Careful consideration should
789 be given to the staff who are best suited to fulfil this task as part of the MAIC, including any training
790 requirements. The appointment of briefing officers, mapping specialists and a MAIC lead or manager
791 should also be well-thought-out and staffed from one or more agencies.

792 Setting up a standard function to gather information from partners is essential; this should be
793 scheduled to happen prior to the meeting of a co-ordinating group.

794 All relevant information from each individual agency should be used to build brief and concise reports
795 that highlight issues and progress. Reporting into a MAIC should be kept simple, highlighting the level
796 of readiness or ability to respond to allow briefings to focus on the priorities. This should be achieved
797 by using a 'red, amber, green' (RAG) status approach:

- 798 • The RAG status is an honest and defensible appraisal of three dimensions of the emergency:
 - 799 ○ a) the situation
 - 800 ○ b) the response to it
 - 801 ○ c) foreseeable developments
- 802 • The three dimensions are separated but are combined into a single indicator, and in the
803 absence of a prescribed method of doing so, the RAG status will reflect the collective
804 judgement of the agency. This will be reflected on the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG)
805 situation report (SITREP).
- 806 • There is no merit in 'talking up' or taking an unrealistically optimistic view of where things
807 stand and how they are projected to develop.
- 808 • The relevant text entry should adequately explain the RAG status given.
- 809 • Indicators of the three levels are defined as follows:

RED

SITUATION: The incident is having a strategically significant impact; normal community business has been significantly affected.

RESPONSE: The response is at or has exceeded the limits of capacity or capability, and further resources are required.

FORWARD LOOK: The situation is expected to either get worse or remain at this level for the short to medium term.

AMBER	<p>SITUATION: The incident is having a moderate impact with issues of strategic concern; normal community business has been affected, but the situation is being effectively managed.</p> <p>RESPONSE: The response is being managed, at this time, within current resources and through the activation of local contingency plans or co-ordinated corrective action; mutual aid might be required in the short to medium term.</p> <p>FORWARD LOOK: The situation is not expected to get any worse in the short to medium term although some disruption will continue.</p>
GREEN	<p>SITUATION: There is limited or no strategic impact from the incident; normal community business has largely returned or is continuing.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Ongoing response is being managed locally, and within the capacity of pre-planned resources.</p> <p>FORWARD LOOK: The situation is expected to improve with residual disruption being managed.</p>

810

811 The MAIC should gather all individual submissions and create one SITREP; this will become the
812 COP. The [ResilienceDirect](#) platform provides a response function well-suited to managing reporting,
813 and using standardised templates, which can be very effective for sharing information to many users
814 at the same time.

815 The MAIC should be flexible and scalable particularly for protracted incidents, such as the COVID-19
816 pandemic, or high-impact spontaneous incidents, such as major flooding.

817 Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) are best suited to producing a working protocol for MAIC operation;
818 comprehensive guidance in a separate product has been developed to provide support.

Situation report	Common Operating Picture
A single report for the whole incident. Collated for briefing purposes.	A continuously evolving live document. What has happened, what is happening now and what is being done about it.
A snapshot in time, the here and now.	What might the implications and wider impacts look like. What might happen in the future.
Includes a forward look and any requests for support.	A narrative to enhance the understanding and context of the pressures and challenges facing the responding agencies.
Includes aspects of service delivery, staffing, sickness, absence, infrastructure levels.	Provides insight and foresight. User-friendly and easy to navigate.
Shows RAG status for each agency against several key areas, with a brief explanatory narrative.	Fuses information and analysis to support decision makers who are busy and under pressure.

819 Figure: Table showing the differences between a situation report and a Common Operating Picture

820 10 Joint Organisational Learning

821 The lessons identified from debriefing activities are vital to improving the way we respond to
822 incidents. Inquests and inquiries focus heavily on previous lessons and responder agencies must be
823 able to prove they have identified and shared learning to try to prevent future similar issues.

824 Issues have frequently been identified, but not successfully acted upon, to improve effective joint
825 working. It is essential that [Joint Organisational Learning](#) (JOL) is accepted as the standard for multi-
826 agency learning and is adopted by all responder agencies to ensure interoperability is continually
827 improved.

828 JOL provides responder agencies with a consistent and accountable mechanism to ensure lessons
829 identified are acted upon, to make the transition from lessons identified to lessons learned.

830 10.1 Joint Organisational Learning arrangements

831 A robust governance structure and process addresses JOL issues:



832

833 Figure: Diagram showing the Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) process and governance

834 The Interoperability Board provides governance for the JOL arrangements. This ensures that any
835 issues regarding interoperability are considered and acted upon by appropriate representatives from
836 the emergency services, their respective government departments and other key stakeholders.

837 The process includes a method to capture, analyse, implement and share learning from incidents,
838 training, testing and exercises, and from other external sources. All responder agencies, some via
839 their Local Resilience Forum (LRF), have access to JOL Online. This is hosted on [ResilienceDirect](#)
840 and they can submit interoperability issues and share notable practice.

841 Most of the lessons to be learned are identified during debrief procedures.

842 *It is essential that responder agencies have robust debrief procedures at a local*
843 *level, which include ways to identify any interoperability lessons and raise them to*
844 *the national level via JOL Online.*

845 **10.2 Debriefing and lessons identified**

846 It is important to capture lessons while events are fresh in the minds of those involved.

847 *Where possible, a joint 'hot debrief' should be held as soon as practicable after an*
848 *incident.*

849 Formal debriefs, which may be held later, should consider the lessons identified and captured from
850 hot debriefs, or equivalent post-incident reviews.

851 *All debriefs should involve the full range of responders and control room personnel*
852 *to ensure the lessons identified are captured from every aspect of the response.*

853 To support emergency services in capturing interoperability lessons, a template can be found in the
854 [JESIP Multi-Agency Debrief Template](#). This template is designed to be integrated into, or used
855 alongside, existing debrief procedures.

856 **10.3 Notable practice**

857 JOL can also be used to share notable practice. This is where services have found a solution to an
858 interoperability issue, which works well and that they wish to share so that others can benefit from
859 their learning.

860 Supporting information, guidance and templates to help with using JOL are available on the JESIP
861 website.

862 **11 Multi-agency retention and disclosure of information**

863 During a multi-agency response, organisations and individuals should ensure they are aware of their
864 obligations to retain, and potentially disclose in the future, material relating to the incident.

865 Much of this material may be relevant in a wide range of proceedings, including criminal and coronial
866 proceedings and public inquiries. Material could include:

- 867 • Incident logs
- 868 • Briefing and debriefing sheets
- 869 • Policy files or decision books
- 870 • Operational or tactical advice notes

871 Further information is provided on the JESIP website. *[To be provided]*

For consultation

872 **12 Military support**

873 This section provides a brief overview on working with the military. It does not cover in depth the
874 process for requesting assistance, or the capabilities and assets available. Further detail can be
875 obtained from the appropriate regional or local Ministry of Defence (MOD) Liaison Officer or the MOD
876 [Joint Doctrine Publication 02 – UK Operations: the Defence Contribution to Resilience and Security](#),
877 which sets out Defence's contribution to resilience and MACA.

878 **12.1 Introduction**

879 Emergency responders must be able to work with other agencies, including the armed forces. Under
880 such circumstances the civil authorities will always lead the response, with Defence in support.
881 However, Defence personnel working with the civil authorities should be aware of the JESIP
882 principles for joint working and will be expected to adhere to them wherever possible.

883 **12.2 Command, control and co-ordination**

884 Civil authorities use the terms 'strategic', 'tactical' and 'operational' to identify individual roles in the
885 command and control structure. This differs from the strategic – operational – tactical structure found
886 in UK and NATO military doctrine.

887 At the local level, the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) will be the multi-agency body that co-
888 ordinates the response to the event or disruptive challenge. While not a categorised responder,
889 where it is appropriate to do so a MOD Liaison Officer (LO) will be expected to attend the SCG.

890 Subordinate to the SCG, tactical co-ordination is exercised through a Tactical Co-ordinating Group
891 (TCG) where Defence may be represented if appropriate. Below that, the civil operational-level
892 commander will work at, or very near, the scene of the incident.

893 **12.3 Military command and control structure**

894 Military command and control structures differ from those used by civil agencies. At the national
895 strategic level, oversight is executed through the MOD in London. Military operational level of
896 command is exercised by the Headquarters Standing Joint Command (UK) (HQ SJC (UK)) based in
897 Aldershot, while the military tactical level of command will usually be held by the Army's Regional
898 Point of Command (RPoC) commanders.

899 For more significant operations, the RPoC commanders may be appointed as Joint Military
900 Commanders (JMCs). They will retain the option of basing themselves at an SCG, although more
901 usually this forward function will be exercised through the standing network of LOs, with the RPoC
902 commander or JMC remaining at their RPoC headquarters.

903 **12.4 Command authority**

904 Defence personnel will always remain under a military chain of command. Military commanders are
905 also authorised to decline requests for support if they believe they are inappropriate, beyond the
906 scope of the original request for assistance, or if they put their personnel at undue risk. In such
907 circumstances, the local military commander will seek direction and guidance from higher military
908 authority as soon as possible.

909 12.5 Defence Fire and Rescue

910 [Defence Fire and Rescue](#) (DFR) is the provider of a professional fire and rescue response capability
911 to Defence. The DFR service is provided by a combination of military personnel, civil servants and
912 Defence contractors. DFR has limited numbers of personnel and specialist equipment, such as
913 airfield rescue and firefighting vehicles, at several MOD establishments across the UK.

914 If an incident on the MOD estate escalates to involve other fire and rescue services and first
915 responders, DFR Incident Command policy presents a building block approach for a robust incident
916 management process. The DFR Incident Command system is based on national fire and rescue
917 service incident command and JESIP principles. This will allow for a seamless transition of command
918 during an operational incident.

919 If the local fire and rescue service attends an incident on Defence estate, the senior fire officer
920 present will normally assume the incident commander role.

921 At incidents where there are special risks, such as those involving explosives, military aircraft or
922 submarines, the local fire and rescue service senior officer will assume the role of 'Fire' incident
923 commander, but will liaise closely with the senior DFR fire officer present, who may assume the role
924 of tactical adviser, sharing risk-critical information.

925 12.6 Military liaison at the sub-national or local level

926 The MOD fields a full-time network of resilience Liaison Officers able to provide support and guidance
927 to civil authorities. These comprise:

Role	Rank	Broad roles
Royal Naval Regional Liaison Officer (RNRLO)	Lieutenant Commander (Lt Cdr)	Naval/maritime Resilience capability advice Represent Defence at SCG/TCG
Joint Regional Liaison Officer (JRLO)	Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)	Army Resilience capability advice Represent Defence at SCG/TCG
Royal Air Force Regional Liaison Officer (RAFRLO)	Wing Commander (Wg Cdr)	Air/aviation Resilience capability advice Represent Defence at SCG/TCG Aircraft Post-Crash Management Major Accident Control Regulations Nuclear Emergency Organisation activities

928 12.7 Requests for Military Aid to the Civil Authorities

929 Requests for Defence support will be judged against four standing [Military Aid to the Civil Authorities](#)
930 (MACA) principles. These are where:

- 931 • There is a definite need to act and the tasks the Armed Forces are being asked to perform are
932 clear
- 933 • Other options, including mutual aid and commercial alternatives, have been discounted
- 934 • The civil authority lacks the necessary capability to fulfil the task and it is unreasonable or
935 prohibitively expensive to expect it to develop one
- 936 • The civil authority has all or some capability, but it may not be available immediately, or to the
937 required scale, and the urgency of the task requires rapid external support from the MOD

938 If a proposal conforms with these principles, the requesting civil authority will be invited to submit a
939 formal, written MACA request setting out the nature of the problem, why Defence support is
940 requested, what other options have been considered, and timings.

941 Usually, requests will be signed off by an officer of at least chief superintendent rank or equivalent
942 and, whilst a copy will be passed into the military command and control network to allow early
943 scoping to occur, the main request must be submitted from the SCG to the appropriate lead
944 government department, having consulted the Government Liaison Officer (GLO).

945 **12.8 Cost recovery**

946 The MOD is required to recover costs from requesting civil authorities for services provided under
947 most circumstances. The detail of cost recovery principles is set out in the MOD Joint Doctrine
948 Publication 02 and fall broadly, into one of three levels; waived costs, marginal costs or full costs.
949 These will be applied noting both policy direction and the degree of urgency associated with the
950 request. Civil authority responders should engage early with the MOD Liaison Officer network, in
951 order to understand the charging implications of any request they make.

952 **12.9 Immediate assistance**

953 Most requests for military support will require Defence ministerial authorisation. However, there is one
954 set of circumstances where local military commanders, irrespective of rank, can authorise the
955 deployment and employment of Defence capability. Such circumstances surround events where
956 there is an urgent need to save life, alleviate distress or protect significant property. Although this
957 happens infrequently, this would be authorised in accordance with an internal Defence Council Order
958 (DCO).

959 **13 Recovery using the Joint Doctrine**

960 [The principles for joint working](#) can also be used in the recovery phase, as detailed in the [National](#)
961 [Recovery Guidance](#). Following any significant incident, the recovery phase is likely to involve a
962 greater number of agencies, stakeholders and public engagement than the response phase. For
963 further information refer to Chapter 5, Recovering from emergencies, of the [Emergency Response](#)
964 [and Recovery - Non statutory guidance accompanying the Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#).

965 In recovery, the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating communities should look beyond
966 the replacement of what has been destroyed and the rehabilitation of those affected.

967 The emergency may provide the catalyst for transformation and revitalisation. As a result, the
968 leadership of any recovery group might vary to that of the response phase, requiring different skills
969 and emphasis, due to the complexity and length of the recovery process.

For consultation

Download the JESIP App for free

Available on iOS and Android



JESIP Roles and Responsibilities

Supporting document for

Edition 3 of the Joint Doctrine (2021)



JESIP

Working Together – Saving Lives

1 **Appendix A: Control room supervision role and responsibilities**

2 **Role**

3 The overarching aim when supervising a control room is to ensure that rapid and effective actions are
4 implemented to save lives, reduce harm and lessen the effects of the incident.

5 **Responsibilities**

- 6 a) Control room supervisors and managers have a responsibility to ensure they are prepared to
7 carry out their role; this includes keeping up to date with policies and processes that are used
8 for major incidents
- 9 b) Make an initial assessment of the available information and ensure that appropriate resources
10 are mobilised; this may include a pre-determined attendance
- 11 c) Determine whether the situation requires a multi-agency response and inform internal and
12 external partners without delay
- 13 d) Each emergency service should communicate the declaration of a major incident to all other
14 Category 1 responders as soon as possible
- 15 e) On the declaration of a major incident, clear lines of communication must be established as
16 soon as possible between the control rooms of the individual emergency services
- 17 f) A single point of contact should be designated within each control room to facilitate such
18 communication
- 19 g) A M/ETHANE message should be shared as soon as possible by the emergency service
20 declaring a major incident
- 21 h) Escalate to and mobilise commanders; some services may maintain command within their
22 control room and if this model is adopted, it is important that they work with on-scene
23 commanders in line with JESIP principles
- 24 i) Maintain an open dialogue with other control rooms and co-ordinate communication between
25 control room single points of contact (SPoCs), using the Emergency Services Interoperability
26 Control (ESICTRL) Talkgroup
- 27 j) Effectively share and co-ordinate available information during the early stages and throughout
28 an incident to establish shared situational awareness and agree a common view of the
29 situation, its consequences and potential outcomes, and the actions required for its resolution.
30 Where possible and appropriate, co-locating representatives from the partner agencies within
31 a control room can help with this.
- 32 k) Jointly agree an initial rendezvous point (RVP) and Forward Command Point (FCP), if
33 required, for the initial response and communicate this to responding resources without delay
- 34 l) Discuss how continually changing hazards and risks affect each organisation and work with
35 multi-agency control room colleagues to address them, remaining aware of the potential
36 impacts of any decisions made
- 37 m) Support the response by ensuring that appropriate additional resources are mobilised,
38 including external resources, such as rescue teams, and command support
- 39 n) As further information or intelligence becomes available, ensure responders and partner
40 agencies are updated

- 41 o) Ensure that statutory responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of personnel are met
- 42 during the incident
- 43 p) Maintain an electronic and retrievable control incident log of decisions made, including the
- 44 rationale for them and any actions to be carried out
- 45 q) Ensure control rooms activities are captured within single and multi-agency debrief processes
- 46 and issues affecting interoperability are shared using Joint Organisational Learning (JOL)
- 47 Online

For consultation

48 **Appendix B: Operational command role and responsibilities**

49 **Role**

50 The role of the operational commander is to protect life, property and the environment by ensuring
51 that rapid and effective actions are implemented at an incident to save lives and reduce harm.

52 Those individuals who are responding on behalf of their agency in either a command or management
53 role are responsible for working together to develop and carry out the initial operational response,
54 ensuring it is co-ordinated and appropriate to the scale of the incident. Where applicable, they will
55 also implement the tactical plan.

56 **Responsibilities**

- 57 a) People who have an operational command or management role have a responsibility to
58 ensure they are prepared to carry out their role; this includes keeping up to date with the
59 policies and processes that are used for major incidents
- 60 b) Protect life, property and the environment
- 61 c) Make an initial assessment of the situation, using M/ETHANE to provide early situational
62 awareness of the incident and the relevant resource requirements, ensuring that where
63 appropriate, a major incident is declared and shared with partners
- 64 d) Co-locate with representatives from other responder agencies to identify a Forward Command
65 Point (FCP), if not already done, and agree initial actions including the timings of future
66 meetings
- 67 e) Make and share decisions with multi-agency colleagues according to your agreed level of
68 responsibility, with an awareness of consequence management using the Joint Decision
69 Model (JDM)
- 70 f) Share information, intelligence and risk information to make effective joint decisions and co-
71 ordinate operational plans by agreeing a common view of the situation, its consequences and
72 potential outcomes and the actions required within a working strategy
- 73 g) Identify the challenges that an organisation's operational plan may present to its multi-agency
74 partners and take action to minimise or reduce them
- 75 h) Carry out a briefing to key responders at the earliest opportunity and at regular intervals
76 subsequently
- 77 i) Identify the role of each agency in managing and co-ordinating the care of victims and
78 survivors, and their relatives and friends
- 79 j) Understand how continually changing hazards and risks affect each organisation and work
80 with multi-agency colleagues to address them ensuring that statutory responsibilities for the
81 health, safety and welfare of personnel are met during the incident
- 82 k) Consider the security of the scene and identify and agree triggers, signals and arrangements
83 for emergency evacuation of responders
- 84 l) Update the tactical commander on any changes, including any variation in agreed multi-
85 agency tactics within their geographical or functional area of responsibility
- 86 m) Request command support at the scene, for example, trained loggists. The amount and type
87 of support will be determined by the incident.

- 88 n) Maintain a contemporaneous log of decisions made, including the rationale for them and any
89 actions to be carried out
- 90 o) Carry out a post-incident hot debrief and contribute to formal structured debriefing where
91 appropriate, ensuring issues concerning interoperability are shared using Joint Organisational
92 Learning (JOL) Online

For consultation

93 **Appendix C: Tactical command role and responsibilities**

94 **Role**

95 The role of the tactical commander is to protect life, property and the environment by ensuring that
96 rapid and effective actions that save lives and reduce harm are implemented through a Tactical Co-
97 ordinating Group (TCG).

98 Tactical commanders are responsible for interpreting strategic direction, where strategic level
99 command is in use, and developing and co-ordinating the tactical plan.

100 While it is acknowledged that local arrangements may exist, the Joint Decision Model (JDM) may be
101 used as the standing agenda for TCG meetings.

102 **Responsibilities**

- 103 a) People who have a tactical command role have a responsibility to ensure they are prepared to
104 carry out their role; this includes keeping up to date with the policies and processes that are
105 used for major incidents
- 106 b) Protect life, property and the environment
- 107 c) Be aware of and understand the multi-agency command structure, commander roles,
108 responsibilities, requirements and capabilities (including gaps), and monitor the operational
109 command structure, including functional roles
- 110 d) Attend the TCG meeting at the earliest opportunity
- 111 e) Establish shared situational awareness between the responder agencies at the tactical level
112 and promote effective decision-making using the JDM
- 113 f) Develop and agree the overall joint intent, objectives and concept of operations, and their
114 achievement within a joint tactical plan, regularly assessing and sharing the information and
115 intelligence available
- 116 g) Understand how ever-changing threats and hazards affect each organisation, and work with
117 multi-agency colleagues to develop a joint understanding of risk, putting in place appropriate
118 mitigation and management arrangements to continually monitor and respond to the changing
119 nature of emergencies for the organisation
- 120 h) Ensure that statutory responsibilities are met for health, safety, human rights, data protection
121 and welfare of people during the incident
- 122 i) Address the longer-term priorities in the recovery of affected communities through restoration
123 of essential services
- 124 j) Warn and Inform the public by providing accurate and timely information to communities using
125 the appropriate media and social media channels
- 126 k) Where necessary make the strategic commander aware of the incident and the common
127 operating picture
- 128 l) Ensure that all tactical decisions made, and the rationale behind them, are documented in a
129 decision log, ensuring that a clear audit trail exists for all multi-agency debriefs and future
130 multi-agency learning

131 m) Make debriefing facilities available and debrief the operational commander, ensuring any
132 issues that have affected interoperability are shared using Joint Organisational Learning (JOL)
133 Online

134 **Tactical Co-ordinating Group**

135 Those people operating at tactical level should form a TCG. Prior to the establishment of a TCG,
136 interoperable voice communications should be used to begin sharing information between
137 responders to build shared situational awareness and a joint understanding of risk.

138 The group should meet at an appropriate and mutually agreed location as soon as practicable. The
139 location should be capable of providing appropriate administrative and technical support and be
140 suitable for holding effective meetings. For some sites, pre-existing locations may have been
141 identified. Tactical commanders should familiarise themselves with any existing local plans.

142 The group should meet as frequently as required by the circumstances of the incident. The meetings
143 should be agreed between the tactical commanders at intervals that ensure continuity in managing
144 the incident, without disrupting the implementation of agreed plans.

145 The group should ensure that updates are available for the strategic co-ordinating group if activated.
146 Those attending the TCG should be decision makers for their organisation and suitably trained to
147 command. Decisions should be recorded for audit purposes and a multi-agency decision log should
148 be used.

149 Clear lines of communication between responder agencies and the TCG are required. If agencies are
150 responding at Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) level or above, it is the role of the SCG chair to
151 ensure that the TCG is updated with the appropriate information.

152 **Appendix D: Strategic command role and responsibilities**

153 **Role**

154 The overarching aim of the strategic commander is to protect life, property and the environment by
155 setting:

- 156 • The policy, strategy and the overall response framework for the incident
- 157 • The tactical and operational command levels to act on and implement

158 Strategic commanders should jointly agree the response strategy with representatives from relevant
159 responder agencies at a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) meeting.

160 **Responsibilities**

- 161 a) People who have a strategic command role have a responsibility to ensure they are prepared
162 to carry out their role; this includes keeping up to date with the policies and processes that are
163 used for major incidents
- 164 b) Protect life, property and the environment
- 165 c) Set, review, communicate and update the strategy, based on available information and
166 intelligence on threat and risk.
- 167 d) Attend the SCG meeting if a group is established, or consider requesting that a SCG is set up
- 168 e) Ensure that there are clear lines of communication between all responder agencies
- 169 f) Remain available to other agencies' strategic or tactical tiers of command, to ensure that
170 appropriate communication mechanisms exist at a local, regional and national level
- 171 g) Ensure, where appropriate, that command protocols are set, agreed and understood by all
172 relevant parties and consider setting tactical parameters within which the tactical level can
173 work
- 174 h) Identify the level of support needed to resolve the incident and where appropriate, secure
175 strategic resources in order to resolve the incident and prioritise the allocation of these
- 176 i) Review and ensure the resilience and effectiveness of the command team, identify
177 requirements for assistance from the wider resilience community and manage them
178 accordingly
- 179 j) Plan beyond the immediate response phase for recovery from the emergency and returning to
180 a new normality
- 181 k) Have overall responsibility within the command structure for health and safety, diversity,
182 environmental protection, equality and human rights compliance, and ensuring that relevant
183 impact assessments are completed
- 184 l) Develop communication and media strategies that provide a coherent and joined up message
- 185 m) Consider any issues that have affected interoperability and ensure they are noted in any
186 debrief reports and shared using Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Online

187 **Appendix E: Strategic Co-ordinating Group role and responsibilities**

188 **Role**

189 The purpose of a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) is to take overall responsibility for the multi-
190 agency management of an incident and establish a strategic framework, within which lower levels of
191 command and co-ordinating groups will work. Its guiding objectives are:

- 192 • Protect and preserve life
- 193 • Contain the incident; mitigate and minimise its impacts, maintain critical infrastructure and
194 essential services
- 195 • Create conditions for recovery; promote restoration and improvement activity in the aftermath
196 of an incident, to return to the new normality

197 It will normally be the role of the police to co-ordinate activity with other organisations and therefore to
198 chair the SCG. The police will usually chair the group if:

- 199 • There is an immediate threat to human life
- 200 • There is a possibility that the emergency was a result of criminal or terrorist activity
- 201 • There are significant public order implications

202 In other types of emergency, for example certain health or maritime scenarios, an agency other than
203 the police may initiate and chair the SCG.

204 **Responsibilities**

205 To ensure that a co-ordinated effort is achieved, a working strategy should be developed by the first
206 responding commanders before the SCG first meets to prioritise actions. When the SCG meets and
207 gains a full understanding of the situation, it should then review and amend the working strategy, and
208 adjust objectives and priorities as necessary.

209 The SCG should be based at an appropriate location away from the scene. The location where the
210 group meets, with its supporting staff in place, is referred to as the strategic co-ordination centre. This
211 will usually, but not always, be at the headquarters of the lead service or organisation.

212 The SCG will:

- 213 a) Determine and share clear strategic aims and objectives and review them regularly
- 214 b) Establish a policy framework for the overall management of the event or situation
- 215 c) Prioritise the requirements of the tactical level and allocate personnel and resources accordingly
- 216 d) Formulate and implement media handling and public communication plans, potentially
217 delegating this to one responder agency
- 218 e) Direct planning and operations beyond the immediate response to manage the recovery
219 process

220 The SCG does not have the collective authority to issue executive orders to individual responder
221 agencies. Each agency retains its own command authority and defined responsibilities, and exercises
222 command of its own operations in the normal way. However, the co-ordinated direction and
223 instructions generated by the SCG will be translated by each responder agency into appropriate

224 commands, passed on through their respective command structures and transmitted directly to all
225 subordinate Tactical Co-ordinating Groups (TCGs).

226 The SCG may take some time to set up and obtain a clear picture of unfolding events. As a priority, it
227 should formulate a strategy with key objectives that encompass and provide focus for all the activities
228 of the responding agencies.

For consultation

229 **Annex 1: Strategic Co-ordinating Group: Example standing agenda**

230 Preliminaries: Pre-notified seating plan by organisation and name plates for attendees

Item	Item Lead
Introductions (by exception and only where deemed necessary)	Chair
Declaration of items for urgent attention	Chair
Confirmation of decisions on urgent items	Chair
Adjourn as necessary to action urgent issues	
Situational briefing (including any clarifications or recent updates from chief of staff/information manager/attendees by exception only)	
Review and agree strategy and priorities	Chair
Review outstanding actions and their effect	Chair
Determine new strategic actions required	Chair
Allocate responsibility for agreed actions	Chair
Confirm date and time of next meeting and required attendees (alongside an established meeting rhythm)	Chair
Post meeting: Distribute record of decisions, ensure decision log is updated and complete	Secretary or Chair

231

For consultation