



Major Incident Guide



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Foreword

This Major Incident Guide provides an overview of the response that can be expected from Swindon Borough Council to an unexpected or pre-planned event requiring emergency management. The guide is fully supported by additional plans and procedures giving the detailed processes to be adopted in the event of such a critical incident. This plan provides guidance for Swindon Borough Council and its employees. It has been compiled in consultation with our partners within the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum.

An integrated emergency management response is the key to a successful outcome. This integration applies to both Swindon Borough Council's internal Directorates and with our internal and external partner agencies.


The effectiveness of an emergency response depends on close co-operation and joint working with our partner agencies. It is the responsibility of everyone within Swindon Borough Council to be fully aware of their responsibilities within this Major Incident Guide and that they have a full understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the other agencies with whom they may be working.

We will fully comply with the legislative duties imposed upon us as a Council by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and other legal requirements that currently exist or those that come into being during the lifetime of this document.

We will continue to develop our Civil Protection procedures and processes through a programme of constant revision, training and exercising. In doing this we will be able to develop our procedures and include these in each revision of this guide.

This document provides guidance for the strategic management of incidents. The supporting guides describe approaches to minimise the risks and effects of such an occurrence and the support available to Swindon Borough Council from within and its partner agencies.

A Major Incident is an event that results in demands on Swindon Borough Council resources that exceed the everyday capacity of the service to respond. The document describes those tasks that must be performed whilst maintaining, as far as possible, our everyday operational activities.



For most of us, involvement in a Major Incident is likely to be a rare occurrence. However, we cannot know when that rare occurrence might materialise. As a Council we need to ensure that we are ready to play our part in the response to Major Incidents.

Gavin Jones
Chief Executive
Swindon Borough Council
April 2008

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Document Issue, Control and Review

Introduction

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This guide is fourth edition of the Swindon Borough Council's Civil Protection Unit's continued development of the document. All previous guides should be destroyed and must not be used in determining strategic, tactical or operational responses to any incident.

This document is published on Swindon Borough Council's website and internally on its own intranet. The number of printed hard copies is severely restricted within Swindon Borough Council to maintain control over all unauthorised copies.

It is not intended to restrict individuals from printing hard copies but those who do should realise that they are responsible for ensuring that the copy they have printed and are about to use is the latest version available. By using a printed hard copy no guarantee can be given that the advice, procedures and processes it contains are current.

Document Management

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that procedures detailed in this plan are current, integrate with all relevant Major Incident Plans and is reviewed annually or earlier if required. These tasks are delegated to the Head of the Civil Protection Unit in line with the policy indicated in this document.



All major stakeholders were and will continue to be consulted during the compilation and development of the document. The Head of the Civil Protection Unit will retain evidence of consultation, amendments and reviews.

This Major Incident Guide will be circulated to a limited number of persons but wider access to it can be obtained from Swindon Borough Council's intranet site. This document is supported by other emergency operational guides and these will be amended in a similar fashion. These supporting guides will receive a wider distribution and will be targeted at those who will need to be aware of the procedures they contain in an emergency. Likewise, they will also be available via Swindon Borough Council's intranet site.

Plan Validity and Development

This plan will be reviewed in February each year when it will be developed as necessary in accordance with any current legislation or guidelines that are in place at that time.

In addition, all the documents will also be developed in line with any lessons that have been identified during the life of this guide through the experience of real emergencies, training or exercising.

Reviews

This Major Incident Guide will be reviewed annually by the Head of the Civil Protection Unit. In conducting the review, those sections, where the lead is within another directorate will be forwarded to the director for that department for review. All reviews will be conducted within one calendar month with all replies being forwarded to the Head of the Civil Protection Unit.

The review process will commence on the 1st February each year and the Head of the Civil Protection Unit will present the reviewed Major Incident Guide to the Corporate Board in April for approval.

Version Control and Numbering

When amending a document it will always be re-issued as a completely new document. However, as seen on the chart below, there will be a description of the amendment that has taken place.

The date is self explanatory and will be the month of issue, e.g. 04 for April. The version number will have two parts, e.g. 08.01. The first part of the number will be the year and the second will be the next amendment number. The description that follows will be a brief explanation of the part of the plan that has been amended.

Aims

When anyone, either individually or collectively, within the Council finds themselves involved in a Major Incident or Emergency it is often difficult to remember the ultimate aim of the Council.

Often when an individual or group gets very close to the incident or they are working extremely hard at trying to resolve issues it is easy to forget how important it is to aim for the final target.

Consequently, the following Corporate Aims should be considered at all times. In this way a focus to what Swindon Borough Council is attempting to achieve can be realised.

Corporate Aims

- To support our community.
- To care for our environment.
- To deliver quality services.

The Aims of Swindon Borough Council's Response to an Incident

- To support the affected community.
- To support the Emergency Services.
- To maintain critical day-to-day services.
- To minimise the effect on the environment.

Bibliography

Joint Procedures Guide.

Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum.

Introduction

This document will give the reader an overview of Swindon Borough Council's response to a real or threatened Major Incident or Emergency. This is not intended to be a comprehensive document detailing the procedures and processes to be undertaken. Those procedures and processes can be found in the plans that support that individual section. Details of these can be found in the bibliography that is included in each section.

The purpose of this Major Incident Guide and its supporting plans is to:

Set out Swindon Borough Council's Civil Protection strategy.

Ensure that effective arrangements are in place to respond to a Major Incident or Emergency.

Provide some general information on the roles and responsibilities of the Emergency Services and other likely responders.

Provide the details of co-ordination and responsibility at emergencies.

This Major Incident Guide has to be read in conjunction with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and its associated statutory and non-statutory documents. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 imposes a duty upon Swindon Borough Council to assess the risk of an emergency occurring, to plan Swindon Borough Council's response to emergencies, to validate those plans and to train its staff.

Additionally, Swindon Borough Council must adhere to other legislative requirements and plan for certain specific emergencies, e.g. Pipeline Safety Regulations 1996.

It creates a duty regarding the warning and informing of members of the public about the identified risks and the promotion of business continuity within the community. Finally, it also requires Swindon Borough Council to identify its own business continuity programme so that it may continue delivering its critical services during an emergency.

Definition of an Emergency

An emergency is defined within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as:

'An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place within the UK, the environment of a place within the UK, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK.'

This is a very broad definition and can be used to cover many possible scenarios. However, within Swindon Borough Council, in order to implement a response to an emergency, including known or suspected acts of terrorism, the following features may be used as a trigger.

Major Incident

Locally, a Major Incident may be defined as shown below. An emergency response will be activated when some or all of the following characteristics require the implementation of special arrangements by one or all of the Emergency Services, the National Health Service or Swindon Borough Council.

The initial treatment, rescue and transportation of large numbers of casualties.

The involvement, either directly or indirectly, of large numbers of people.

The handing of a large number of enquiries likely to be generated from the public and the news media, usually, but not exclusively, made to the Police.

The need for large scale combined resources of the Police, Fire and Rescue Service and Ambulance Service.

The mobilisation and organisation of the Emergency Services and supporting agencies, for example, Swindon Borough Council, to cater for the threat of death, serious injury or homelessness to a large number of people.

For specific health purposes, a Major Incident may be defined as:

‘Any occurrence which presents a serious threat to the health of the community, disruption to the service, or causes (or is likely to cause) such members or types of casualties as to require special arrangements to be implemented by hospitals, ambulance services or health authorities.’

An Internal Emergency

A Major Incident has been defined as it requires the combined efforts of a large number of agencies. However, if the only organisation needed to respond to an incident within Swindon is Swindon Borough Council itself, e.g. an incident that causes a large number of telephone enquiries, the principles identified in this document can still and should be applied internally.

Causes of Major Incidents and Emergencies

Emergencies have a wide variety of causes and these may include:

Natural	Storms, floods, snowfall and landslides.
Technological	Damage to structures and buildings; industrial e.g. explosions, release of toxic or radioactive substances; transport accidents, e.g. air, rail, road; utility failures.
Social	Health emergencies e.g. epidemics.
Environmental	Air, water and land pollution or contamination.
Hostile Acts	Terrorism.

Civil Protection Duties

Swindon Borough Council, under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, is identified as a Category 1 Responder and as such is one of the core agencies to react to an emergency. Category 1 Responders are subject to the full set of civil protection duties and consequently work in close liaison with the other local responders as part of the Local Resilience Forum in conducting those duties. The Local Resilience Forum co-operate with each other to fulfil the prescribed duties and as such have produced many joint documents to deal with specific areas of emergency response.

Swindon Borough Council is required to:

Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and to use this to instigate contingency planning.

Put in place appropriate emergency plans.

Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements.

Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.

Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.

Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum

This group consists of:

Swindon Borough Council
Wiltshire Constabulary
Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Great Western Ambulance Service
Wiltshire and Swindon Primary Care Trusts
The Health Protection Agency
Wiltshire County Council
The Environment Agency



All of these agencies are Category 1 Responders within the meaning of the term in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Although the Military are not a Category 1 Responder to an emergency they are also participants in this group due to their prominence in the area.



Also present at the Local Resilience Forum meetings are Regional Resilience Forum representatives.

The Wiltshire and Swindon members of the Local Resilience Forum will, as soon as possible at the occurrence of a Major Incident, form as the Strategic Co-ordinating Group.

The Local Resilience Forum has a number of sub-groups to assist in its work. These sub-groups meet on a regular basis to discuss work streams and developments in Civil Contingency Planning.

The Local Resilience Forum Sub-Groups are:

Sub-Group	Chaired by
Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear & Hazard Profiling.	Health Protection Agency.
Consequent Management	Wiltshire County Council.
Flood Preparedness	Environment Agency.
Local Authority.	Wiltshire County Council.
Recovery	Wiltshire County Council.
Risk Assessment.	Great Western Ambulance Service.
Training.	Fire and Rescue Service.
Voluntary Aid Societies.	Swindon Borough Council.
Warning, Informing and Educating.	Police.
Welfare including Health.	Primary Care Trust.



Local Resilience Forum Documents

The Local Resilience Forum Sub-Groups have produced a number of documents that are available via the internet. Where these are mentioned in bibliographies within this document and its associated guides a link will be attached to enable the reader to view the document.

Currently the documents available for viewing are:

Hazardous Materials Guide.
Joint Procedures Guide.
Media Guide.
Community Risk Register.
Risk Management Process.
Extreme Weather.

Alerting Procedures

Bibliography

Alerting Procedures Guide.	Swindon Borough Council.
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Introduction

Swindon Borough Council may become aware of an incident in a number of different ways. It may be that an external agency, usually the Emergency Services, will make contact with Swindon Borough Council informing it of a particular incident or problem. It may also be that a series of minor incidents are affecting the community and it is the public who make the initial direct contact with Swindon Borough Council seeking assistance or the incident comes to the notice of Swindon Borough Council through the knowledge of its own officers.

Additionally, it may be another agency informing Swindon Borough Council of an impending problem, e.g. the Environment Agency, Metrological Office or National Severe Weather Warning Service, warning Swindon Borough Council of the potential for flooding or severe weather.

Having been alerted Swindon Borough Council must be aware of its obligation to identify and respond appropriately to incidents that require emergency action. Individuals must also be aware of those incidents, that whilst not an emergency at the time of being reported, has the potential to escalate into a Major Incident or Emergency.

Swindon Borough Council is well prepared for emergencies through planning and testing. However, the need to respond both appropriately and quickly will depend largely on its ability to identify either a Major Incident or Emergency, or the potential for such an event and then to effectively and efficiently place key members of Swindon Borough Council in a position to respond.

Notification

When notified of an incident the member of staff receiving the information will be required to complete the First Notification Form. The form includes all the information that is initially required to understand what has happened and the severity of the incident.

Alerts will fall into two categories and whilst each will have, as far as possible, the same alerting procedure, there will be differences. Calls may be received both during normal working hours and out of hours.

On receipt of this information by anyone, other than the Control Room, it must be passed as soon as possible to the Swindon Borough Council Control Room.

The Control Room Supervisor will ensure that the following are informed immediately:

Swindon Borough Council's on call Local Authority Incident Officer.

The on call Civil Protection Unit Officer.

Both of the above officers will be available 24/7 according to a maintained and up to date call out list. On receipt of the information both officers will analyse the information and make an informed decision regarding the need for further action. They may need to make further enquiries if the nature of the information is insufficient in the initial stages to make an informed decision. Where necessary the Local Authority Incident Officer and the Civil Protection Officer will converse.

Using the Control Room both officers will direct the necessary staff to commence the response to the incident. In the initial stages all actions must be recorded and passed through the Control Room in order that a full and comprehensive record can be maintained. When the Emergency Operations Centre is operational it will continue these duties.

The Local Authority Incident Officer

The Local Authority Incident Officer, following discussions with the Civil Protection Officer, may alert appropriate personnel to immediately respond to the incident.

On each occasion the Local Authority Incident Officer will inform the appropriate personnel of the tasks he / she wishes them to perform giving each the exact details as they are known at that time so that time and resources are not wasted or misused. All directions, requests for additional staff and equipment must be routed via the Control Room where it will be recorded and actioned on the appropriate message forms.

The Civil Protection Officer


The Civil Protection Officer will, on confirmation of the incident and having made any necessary further enquiries, alert:

The Chief Executive or his / her nominee.

Any other agency that is likely to respond to the Major Incident or Emergency.

Other staff required to support and administer Swindon Borough Council's response, including the on call Directors of Swindon Borough Council's contractors.

Any of the voluntary agencies required to respond and assist in the incident.



The Civil Protection Officer will then ensure that where appropriate the Emergency Operations Centre is opened and appropriately staffed.

Depending on the type of incident and the known or expected level of contact with Swindon Borough Council by the community and the responding agencies, the Civil Protection Officer must consider the need to alert Capita so they might provide the necessary staffing levels to deal with all such enquiries.

When the Civil Protection Officer is satisfied that these actions are being completed he / she should attend the most appropriate location, as directed by the Chief Executive, to provide continued support and advice to Swindon Borough Council's Officers.

The Chief Executive (or nominee)

Having been alerted to the incident and obtained sufficient information the Chief Executive will alert:


The Corporate Board members who will form as the Strategic Command Team.
--

Any additional officers that will constitute the Strategic Command Team.
--

If required, the Local Authority Liaison Officer to attend the Strategic Co-ordinating Group. (Chief Executive is required to nominate a representative as appropriate).
--

The Leader of the Business Continuity Team (Director).
--

The Leader of the Support Team (Director).
--



Declaration of a Major Incident

It will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive to declare a Major Incident on behalf of Swindon Borough Council. In doing so he / she will need to be in possession of as many facts as possible, be aware that the incident may well develop in intensity and that the definition of a Major Incident or Emergency is fulfilled or has the potential to be fulfilled.

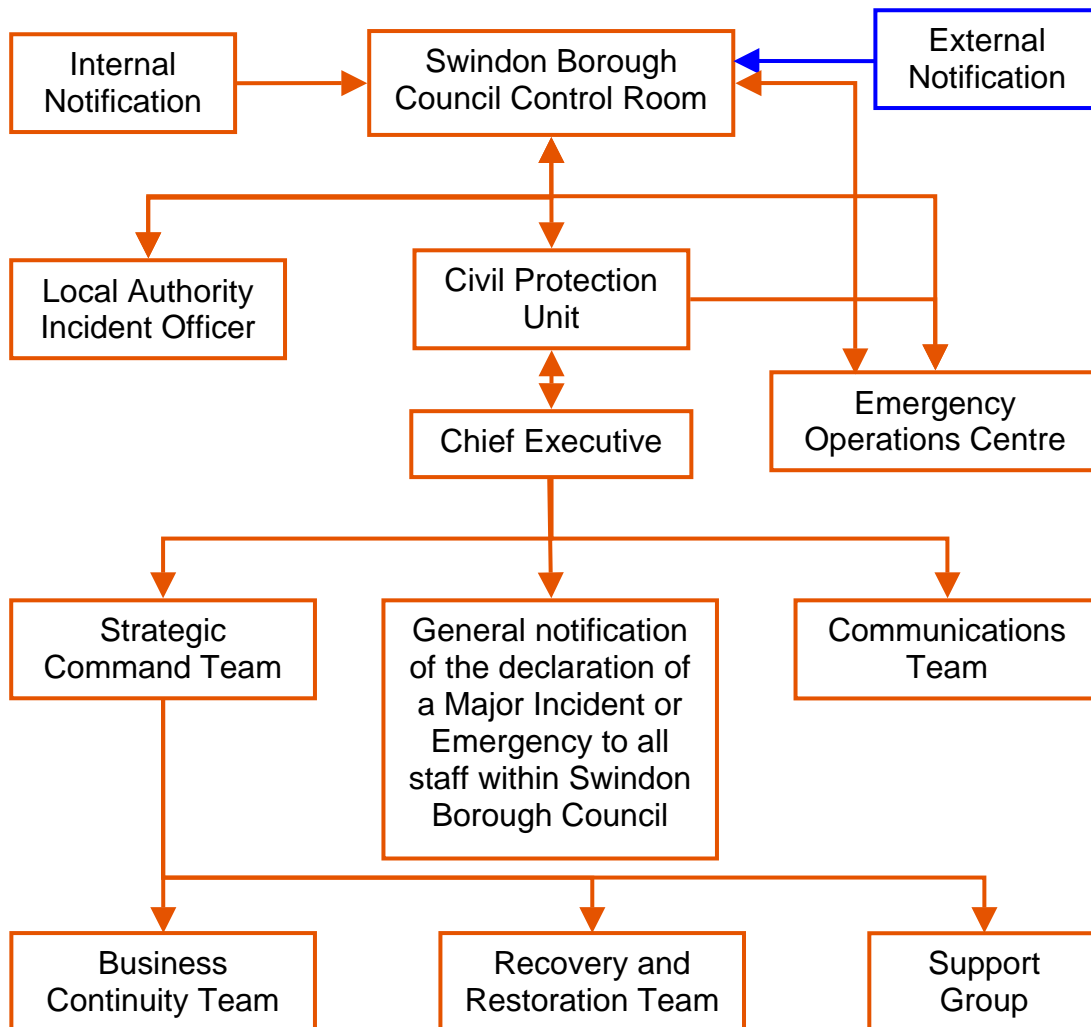
As a member of the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum it must be understood that the declaration of a Major Incident will be a Major Incident for all members. This will be the case regardless of the involvement of the other members in the incident. Even though the incident is internal to Swindon Borough Council the partner agencies in the Local Resilience Forum should be notified that Swindon Borough Council is experiencing its own emergency as there may be issues that will affect the others.

Where a Major Incident is declared by another Local Resilience Forum Agency there will be a requirement for Swindon Borough Council to be fully involved in the strategic resolution of the incident. Offers of assistance to partner agencies should also be made where this is appropriate.

Once a Major Incident has been declared the Chief Executive will ensure that all directorates are informed immediately. On being informed of a Major Incident all directorates and departments will immediately invoke their individual Business Continuity Plans to ensure that 'business as usual' is undertaken as far as reasonably practicable.

Where difficulties are experienced by directorates or departments this will be immediately notified to the Group Director for the information of the Strategic Command Team.

Alerting Flow-chart



Stand-down Procedures

At the conclusion of the response phase to a Major Incident or Emergency, when the vast majority of staff within Swindon Borough Council are no longer required to perform any response that those who were informed of the Major Incident and Emergency by a general notification are also informed that the incident has ceased. The method of doing this should be similar that that of notification.

However, it is necessary at this stage to inform staff that the collection of vital information relating to the incident is particularly important. Staff should also be informed that a review of the incident will also take place and that some or all of those involved may be asked to participate.

The continued involvement of Swindon Borough Council in any recovery and restoration phases should also be indicated at this time, noting that many of the staff involved in the incident so far will not longer be required to participate.

Command, Control and Communication

Bibliography

Joint Procedures Guide.	The Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum.
Strategic Command Guide.	Swindon Borough Council.
Business Continuity Team Guide.	Swindon Borough Council.
Local Authority Incident Officer Guide.	Swindon Borough Council.
Emergency Operations Centre Guide.	Swindon Borough Council.

Command and Control


Command and Control of a Major Incident or Emergency has just three levels and these are applied throughout all agencies involved in an emergency. No other level is added as this will only serve to slow the lines of communication which must be short and clearly defined to allow for accurate and speedy passage of information. The levels of Command and Control are replicated in the other responding agencies.

The levels of Command and Control are:

- **Strategic** - Also referred to as Gold.
- **Tactical** - Also referred to as Silver.
- **Operational** - Also referred to as Bronze.

Strategic Command

This is the highest level of management within the Command and Control system and is managed at a Chief Executive and Group Director level. The lead within Swindon Borough Council will chair the Strategic Command Team and will be located in the Corporate Board Room or if this is not available, another suitable venue. The Corporate Board Room has the appropriate equipment to make it suitable for this purpose. Any other location chosen must also have similar appropriate facilities.



The Strategic Command Team under the direction of the chair evaluates the developments within the emergency and determines Swindon Borough Council strategic policy and identifies the necessary resources and funding. In determining the policy to deal with the emergency the Strategic Command Team will take a wider and overall view of the incident and look to the future and final resolution of the incident.

The chair of the Strategic Command Team may also attend the Strategic Co-ordinating Group. This group, which comprises the executive level commanders of all the other responding agencies to the incident is usually chaired by the Police and held at Police Headquarters, Devizes, where facilities have been made available to those attending the Strategic Co-ordinating Group.

The function of this group is to formulate an overall strategic policy, in consultation with the other responding agencies, to deal with the emergency.

If the chair of the Strategic Command Team is unable to attend the Strategic Co-ordinating Group at Police Headquarters, or other location as appropriate, then he / she must appoint a nominee who will have the executive authority of Swindon Borough Council at those meetings to undertake the role of the Strategic Commander of Swindon Borough Council. This individual will be identified as the Local Authority Liaison Officer.

Hand-over of the Strategic Command

At the commencement of a Major Incident or Emergency the strategic command is likely to be held by the Police. In certain circumstances the Chair of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group may well be placed with another agency dependant upon the conditions of the incident, e.g. an incident involving health issues may well be chaired by the Primary Care Trust.

However, as the incident moves from the response phase into the recovery and restoration phases it is likely that the Police and other Emergency Services will have a less prominent role. As the incident moves into the recovery phase of the Major Incident or Emergency it is likely that the strategic command of the occurrence will pass to the Local Authority.

In making the decision to hand-over the strategic command of an incident the chair and other attendees at the Strategic Co-ordinating Group will discuss the issues and there will be a consensus that this course of action is correct. There will be minutes of the meeting where this will be recorded. At this point the Chief Executive of Swindon Borough Council or his / her nominee will commence the Chair of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group and continue with that position for the duration of the recovery and restoration phases.



Tactical Command

The Tactical Command of the incident will be undertaken by a suitably trained member of staff within Swindon Borough Council and will usually be the Director of Business Continuity within Swindon Borough Council. However, other individuals have been trained for the role in the event the nominated post holder is not available.

The Tactical Commander will use the strategies identified by the Strategic Command Team to determine the objectives to achieve a swift and satisfactory conclusion to the incident. The Tactical Commander will bring together a number of other directors to assist with the process of achieving the objectives. This group will form the Business Continuity Team. This function will, in the main, be inward looking within Swindon Borough Council.

Operational Command


These managers will undertake the completion of the tasks identified by the Business Continuity Team. There will be other Operational Commanders undertaking other duties at the same time but all will report to the chair of the Business Continuity Team. Operational Commanders also include the Local Authority Incident Officer, or Officers if there is more than one scene to the incident.

Communications

The need for short and effective lines of communication is extremely important if the Command and Control of an incident is to be effective. It is also important that all relevant information is identified and passed appropriately. To assist in this process, within Swindon Borough Council, all communication will be via the chain of command and all messages and actions will be passed to the Emergency Operations Centre by all teams and individuals with a role to perform in the incident.

In the Emergency Operations Centre the Manager will ensure that all calls are quickly and effectively dealt with. All messages will be recorded and actioned in accordance with the instructions of the Manager. A system of recalling actions to be undertaken and recording results will be applied. The system should be capable of audit should there be a need for management information.

It is important therefore that the Emergency Operations Centre is appropriately staffed with all resources to allow it to function correctly. The Emergency Operations Centre will not only take calls from within Swindon Borough Council but also from the agencies responding to the incident. This function is both outward and inward looking.



Responses within Swindon Borough Council and between the other agencies involved in the emergency must be effective and efficient in order that the exact situation is known at all times. Any delay in clarifying situations will allow for an incorrect decision making process and the potential for conflict between agencies at a critical time.

See also the Emergency Operations Centre Guide.

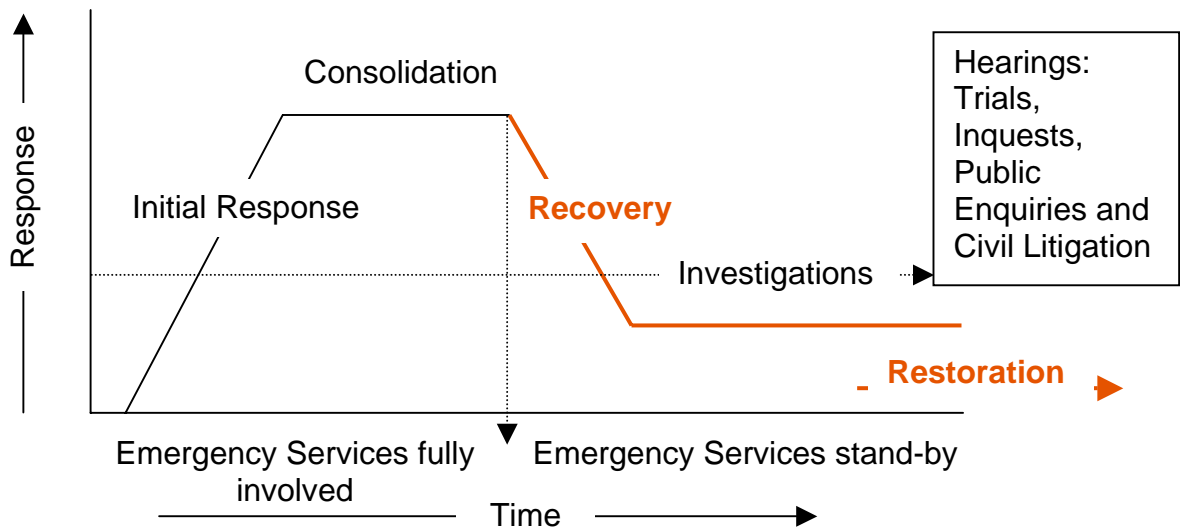
This function will, in the main, be outward looking within Swindon Borough Council but it will also have an inward looking role in support of the Business Continuity Team.

Recovery and Restoration

Introduction

The diagram below indicates the phases of a Major Incident or Emergency. The Local Authority will have a primary responsibility during the recovery and restoration phases that will continue to be undertaken long after the other responders to the incident have concluded their involvement.


Diagram



The Recovery and Restoration Team

The Recovery and Restoration Team is an important element within the overall resolution of a Major Incident or Emergency. The chair of the team will be elected by the Chief Executive at the commencement of a Major Incident or Emergency and will meet to deal with the many issues that it will face in the coming months. Initially, the team will focus upon the consequence management of the incident, identifying the issues that will continue to disrupt the effective and efficient running of the event by any decisions that are not fully integrated within the strategies identified to deal with the occurrence.

It will be this management of these consequences that will subsequently lead to the effective and efficient recovery and restoration of the incident. Therefore, the recovery and restoration phases of a Major Incident or Emergency commence as soon as the incident occurs even though Swindon Borough Council and all the other agencies will still be in the responding phase. Failure to commence these phases as soon as possible will mean that the team will always be behind with the important work that they will have to undertake.



The Recovery and Restoration Team will be at a tactical level within the command and control structure. They will be tasked directly by the Strategic Command Team but will work in close co-operation with the Business Recovery Team and the Emergency Operations Centre.

The Strategic Command Team will identify its strategy towards the recovery and restoration phases as soon as it is in a position to fully understand the consequences of the incident and the impact it has had and will continue to have in the foreseeable future. It will be from this strategy that the Chair of the Recovery and Restoration Team will commence Swindon Borough Council's continuing involvement in the incident.

Donations

In most Major Incidents and Emergencies there will be a public response to the incident including the donation of monies to a disaster fund. It will be the responsibility of the Recovery and Restoration Team to oversee the management of any fund that is created to relieve the suffering of those involved.

Where necessary the Chair of the Recovery and Restoration Team will identify additional resources to assist in the management of any fund. This could include the involvement of the British Red Cross Society as they have considerable experience of managing funds of this nature.

Media, Publicity and Public Relations

Bibliography

Media Guide.	The Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum.
Emergency Communications Response Guide.	Swindon Borough Council.

Introduction

Civil emergencies, by their very nature, will attract considerable media attention. That attention will not just be from local or national sources but also internationally. News is now a 24 hour phenomenon and as such the responders to a Major Incident or Emergency must be ready to react to the requests for continued and updated information. Therefore, in advance of any such emergency Swindon Borough Council has identified how it will respond to any media interest affecting Swindon Borough Council. Not only will Swindon Borough Council have to be prepared to provide a Media Centre where the media responders will be briefed but they may also be required to provide an information enquiry service and do this in co-operation with the other agencies involved.


The Emergency Communications Response Guide prepared by Swindon Borough Council gives greater detail on how this will be achieved. Additionally, the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum has prepared a Media Guide detailing how the responding agencies, as a whole, will prepare for and deal with the media interest in a Major Incident or Emergency. Where there is a requirement for the general public to be warned and informed there is also a Local Resilience Forum Guide for this process.

Responsibilities

The Police will take the lead in any response to the media following a Major Incident or Emergency where there is a Multi-Agency involvement. However, whilst they may take the lead it will not be their responsibility, nor should it be, to lead on issues affecting Swindon Borough Council. That is and will remain the responsibility of the Chief Executive, or his / her nominee and undertaken by Swindon Borough Council's Communication Manager.

Organisation

The Communications Manager is responsible directly to the Chief Executive for all aspects of Swindon Borough Council's publicity and public relations for the duration of an emergency. This responsibility continues for any Council public information requirements that arise as a consequence of the incident.



The agreed media strategy for a Major Incident will be set by the Strategic Co-ordinating Group for the Major Incident or Emergency. From this strategy the Communications Manager will determine the tactics to achieve the corporate aims of Swindon Borough Council.

See Corporate Aims - page 4.

Those tactics may include the provision of a service by Swindon Borough Council to ensure that enquiries from the public are dealt with effectively and efficiently. If this is the case the Communications Manager will liaise with Swindon Borough Council's internal partners, Capita, to ensure that this can be achieved.

Media Messages

During a Major Incident or Emergency the need for information is often immediate. Delays in passing vital information can lead to inaccurate information circulating that will allow conjecture to outweigh the real facts.


There are a number of ways in which messages can be passed to the community in a Major Incident. All have advantages and disadvantages but must be considered to ensure that the public are aware of the current situation. The Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum have produced a Warning and Informing Guide to assist in this procedure. The Communications Manager will use the principles set out in this document to pass such messages.

The Communications Manager will use their experience and knowledge of the incident at that time to determine the best and most advantageous method of informing the public. The Communications Manager will ensure that he / she has a complete overview of all public information tactics available at the time.

Swindon Borough Council Information Enquiry Service

This service will be provided by Swindon Borough Council to ensure that members of the community who make direct contact with Swindon Borough Council and are in need of information relating directly or indirectly to the consequences of the incident are informed of the situation.

It is not possible to predict in advance whether an Information Enquiry Service will need to be established in the wake of a Major Incident, nor to assess the type of information that might be requested by the public. This will depend entirely on the scope and nature of the incident.



If the volume of public enquiries is foreseen as being small, then it may be possible that the enquiries could be handled by the existing Customer Services staff and where necessary they may be supplemented by additional staff as directed by Swindon Borough Council's strategic partner Capita. Swindon Borough Council's 24-hour Control Room will also play a major role.

If it becomes apparent that a special information enquiry service is needed and the number of enquiries being made is sufficient, Capita will be required to provide additional staffing together with any additional communications infrastructure.

The Capita Services Manager will need to arrange the briefing of those staff employed in the enquiry service and the provision of information necessary to assist them in dealing with queries. This briefing information will be provided by the Communication Manager and will be amended as required as the incident progresses.

Media Networks

The Communications Manager, in liaison with the other responding agency Media Managers, will co-ordinate the requirements of Swindon Borough Council for the use of media facilities in connection with the Major Incident (e.g. public warnings, calls for volunteers etc). However, if Liaison Officers are not available and there is an urgent need to broadcast emergency announcements, contact with the relevant media will be made as soon as the authority of the Chief Executive has been given.

There are numerous outlets that can be used for passing information and requests. The Communications Manager will use the most appropriate method to achieve the aim. The various networks will include:

- Local and national radio.
- Local and national television.
- Text messages.
- The internet.
- Printed information.

Roles and Responsibilities

Bibliography

Joint Procedures Guide.	The Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum.
Roles and Responsibilities Guide.	Swindon Borough Council.

Aims

When dealing with a Major Incident or Emergency remember our strategic aims during the incident:

See Corporate Aims - Page 4.

Introduction

A Major Incident cannot be dealt with by a single responding agency as the many facets involved in any occurrence of such magnitude are too great. The functions required to deal with this incident lie beyond the responsibilities of just one organisation.

Consequently, when an incident occurs within Swindon Borough Council, all agencies involved in responding to such an emergency are informed and they all respond with one accord. 'A Major Incident for one organisation is a Major Incident for all'.

It is important that all responders are aware of their role and responsibilities. In this way agencies do not complete functions twice whilst ignoring others.

General

With most Major Incident or Emergency there will be a need to rescue members of the public either with a view to tending their injuries or removing them from real or potential danger.

It is almost a natural reaction on arriving at the scene of an incident to rescue those who have been involved. This may or may not assist in the overall recovery of the incident. Therefore, rescue will often be the prime function of the Emergency Services and where others are willing to assist and providing that it is not detrimental to the assistants or the rescue operation itself, this responsibility will lie with the Fire and Rescue Service.

The care and transportation of casualties to hospital is the responsibility of the Ambulance Service and dependent upon the nature of the incident, co-ordination of the whole incident will be led by the most appropriate Category 1 Responder. In most cases this is likely to be the Wiltshire Constabulary.

In order to ensure the health and safety of all personnel moving within the Inner Cordon (area of immediate operational activity) the Fire and Rescue Service will operate an Incident Command System and take responsibility for the safety of personnel within that area. Once the Fire and Rescue Service has fulfilled its health and safety function at the scene of the incident then this role may be passed to another appropriate agency.

Common Objectives for all Responding Agencies

All responding agencies to a declared Major Incident will be working to provide a co-ordinated response through the following common objectives. Each agency will have their own primary responsibilities within these common objectives.

To save life and alleviate suffering associated with the incident, at the scene and elsewhere.
To prevent the incident escalating.
To safeguard the environment.
To prevent or minimise adverse effects on the health and welfare of those involved in the incident.
To facilitate a joint co-ordinated approach through liaison.
To protect and preserve the scene.
To provide a joint response to the media.
To gather, collate and disseminate information.
To update friends and relatives on relevant issues.
To provide continued support, welfare and liaison to all involved in the incident after the initial response.
To investigate the cause.
To contribute to the de-briefing process and subsequent investigation and enquiries.
To maintain the service normally provided.
To restore normality after all necessary actions have been taken.

These common objectives will be achieved by invoking the primary roles and responsibilities of each responding agency.

Functions and Objectives of Swindon Borough Council

General

To assist Swindon Borough Council to achieve these common objectives it has its own Civil Protection responsibilities and they are based on the following principles:

To support the Emergency Services and those agencies engaged in the response to a Major Incident as required.

To be prepared to take the lead in certain Major Incidents, e.g. incidents involving schools.

To provide the co-ordination for all Swindon Borough Council's resources.

To maintain and restore community services.

To activate and co-ordinate the response of the voluntary agencies and other supporting agencies.

To provide transport and suitable temporary accommodation for survivors, evacuees, family and friends.

To provide assistance and support for any Temporary Mortuary requirement.

To provide a Media Centre as required.

To provide any emergency catering as required.

To provide specialist council support, e.g. engineering, highways, environmental health as required.

To develop and maintain business continuity plans so that disruption to day-to-day activities is minimised.

To ensure it has the ability to respond to any emergency or disruption irrespective of its cause.

Additional Responsibilities of the Civil Protection Unit

In addition to the above roles and responsibilities the Civil Protection Unit has the following tasks:

To create a single unified response approach, whereby the activities of the Local Authority, volunteers and other agencies are co-ordinated.

To arrange training for the appropriate staff.

To exercise such arrangements.

Group Directorate Responsibilities

The following Group Directorates have the following responsibilities:

Chief Executive	Strategic Command Team. Policy. Finance.
Children.	Emergency procedures involving schools and school trips.
Housing and Social Care	Care of homeless and displaced persons. Care of the vulnerable.
Environment and Regeneration	Road clearance. Bridges. Transport. Buildings safety. Environmental health. Information (Libraries, Community Centres, Museums) Ongoing support to the community.
Business Transformation	Civil Protection. Law and Democratic Services. Communications. Procurement. Communications / Public Relations / Media.
Capita	Health and Safety. Human Resources. Public Information.
Swindon Commercial Services	Waste management. Street cleaning. Safety of sheltered accommodation and residential homes. Provision of Rest Centres. Pollution. Liaison with Critical National Infrastructure.



The Other Responding Agencies

For details of the roles and responsibilities of the other agencies please see the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum document 'Joint Procedures Guide'.

Elected Members

Response Phase

The role of elected members during the Response Phase of a Major Incident or Emergency is shown below:

The Leader of the Council

Will be available to liaise with the Chief Executive regarding:

- The strategic direction that has been agreed with its partners.
- The use of Council resources during the incident.
- The availability of the Leader to act as a Media VIP for Swindon Borough Council.
- To co-ordinate the response of members to the affected communities.
- Liaise with visiting Members of Parliament.
- If the incident is still ongoing, to visit the scene and speak with workers together with ward / parish members as appropriate.

Portfolio Holders


- Will be available to liaise with and support the responsible Director.

Members

- Provide valuable local area knowledge – geographical and demographic.
- Be a point of contact for members of the affected community.
- Visit evacuees at the Rest Centres.
- Speak to residents and businesses affected by the incident: try to pick up the issues and pass them to the Strategic Command Team via the Leader of the Council.
- Remain in contact with the affected Parish / Town Councils and Wards.

Additional Actions for Elected Members:

- On receiving information about the incident:
 - Verify the source of the information to establish how accurate it is.
 - Record the information and the level of confidence you have in the accuracy of the detail as judged by the source.
 - Record contact details of the source and the time and date received.
- If the information is life threatening contact the appropriate Emergency Service direct via 999.

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- Remember that in the early stages of an incident not all the facts will be known and verifiable information may not be available. Please bear this in mind when asking officers for information soon after the incident.
 - For general information about the incident refer to the Swindon Borough Council website, www.swindon.gov.uk. If the information is not there, or you have information that is not posted, then you should contact the Emergency Operations Centre who will be managing all information. You should not expect to have direct contact with the officers delivering front line services as distractions can slow response times.
 - The Emergency Operations Centre will produce situation reports for officers and members during the incident.

Areas where care is required by Elected members:

- Do not give any statements to the media on behalf of or as a representative of Swindon Borough Council unless they are in keeping with the joint media strategy agreed by the Responding Agencies. If in doubt contact with the Communications Manager should be made. Comments relating to fact and not opinion should be given.
- Do not become involved at the scene of the incident, or in operational matters, unless specifically asked to do so. Members are not insured or trained in such matters and may hinder the responding agencies.

Recovery Phase

Elected Members of the affected community have an important role to play in assisting with the recovery process. They have a duty as community representatives to gather and make known the concerns of their community and feed these issues into the recovery process. They also have a very important role in disseminating credible information and advice back to the community.

As civic leaders, elected members are involved in a wide variety of community life, such as School Governing bodies, local charities and community groups. All of these and the many more bodies that can be found in the community can be a source of help and specialist advice.



Additionally they have a role as:

- The knowledge bank of local personalities and resources.
- Giving encouragement and support to recovery teams working within their community.
- Enhancing local community liaison.
- Visiting affected people, being a listening ear and giving reassurance.
- Consulting on rebuilds and modernisation.
- Assisting with the media in getting messages to the community whilst still following established policy guidelines.
- Assisting with VIP visits.
- Liaising with other elected representatives.
- Assisting with and possibly chairing debriefing sessions within the community.

Internal Partner Agencies

Introduction

Swindon Borough Council, as part of its continuing development works in partnership with three strategic partners whilst maintaining an integrated business structure.

Capita

This strategic partnership brings benefits to both residents and businesses from the development of a new contact centre and a One Stop Shop, which will become the first point of contact for all services Swindon Borough Council offers.

Services that will be delivered by the partnership include:

- Customer Services.
- IT.
- Finance Administration.
- Human Resources and Payroll.
- Business Support.

Swindon Commercial Services

Swindon Commercial Services is an 'arms length' company wholly owned by Swindon Borough Council and provides a 'core basket' of services to Swindon Borough Council. In this relationship Swindon Borough Council act as the client with Swindon Commercial Services as the Contractor.

Swindon Commercial Services is a multi-disciplined business spanning a full range of services and is based at Waterside Park, Cheney Manor Industrial Estate, Swindon.

It is the direct Labour Organisation of Swindon Borough Council providing traditional public realm services. It also tenders for work in areas such as construction projects and provides services where additional dividend can be returned to Swindon Borough Council including recreation, commercial catering and security.

The core basket of services includes:

Refuse Collection.
Waste Disposal.
Waste Minimisation and Recycling.



Street Cleaning.
Grounds Maintenance.
Cemeteries and Crematoria.
Highways Maintenance and Street Cleaning.

Swindon Primary Care Trust

The Swindon Primary Care Trust and Swindon Borough Council continue to pursue integrated working. There are now a number of Directors working within both Swindon Borough Council and the Swindon Primary Care Trust.

The structures in management and staffing in support of the new Director level structure across Swindon Primary Care Trust and Swindon Adult Social Care have been designed to ensure that they:

Are fit for purpose.
Have the senior management leadership and capability to perform the functions and roles of an integrated and effective service.
Have the organisation, structure and capability to deliver on local corporate priorities and national policy direction.

The structures have been developed, with key statutory requirements in mind, in order to support us in delivering functions and roles as we work in an increasingly integrated manner.

Training

Introduction

Training for Major Incidents or Emergencies is not just about attending courses to learn how they should be dealt with. Dealing with a Major Incident or Emergency is about using management skills to their best advantage in times of disaster in the most effective and efficient manner.

When there is little opportunity or time to consider which option would be the best one to take there needs to be pre-identified guides to lead staff through the incident. However, the guide itself is not enough. The practitioner also needs to have read and understood the instructions. Not only this but he / she also need to be able to implement the information in a co-ordinated and cohesive manner with colleagues working in the same incident albeit on a different task.


Therefore, the attendance on courses is only a minor part of the solution. It is necessary for all members of staff with a predetermined role to play in a Major Incident or Emergency, within Swindon Borough Council, to prepare themselves in advance.

This can be achieved in a number of ways. As Major Incidents or Emergencies are thankfully a rare occurrence, the usual manner in preparing for such an incident is to train together in a series of exercises. This will not preclude the need to identify some members of staff who will need to receive instruction in the tasks that they will be required to perform, e.g. the Emergency Operations Centre staff will need to understand their role and what they will need to achieve. Having received the instruction it will then be possible to put that information into context by exercising with others the roles that need to be performed.

Exercising

All staff that have been pre-identified for roles within a Major Incident or Emergency will receive training at least annually to test their knowledge and preparedness. The large proportion of staff will be volunteers and it will be necessary for those members of staff to be made available by Line Managers to undertake the training and to be available in the event of a Major Incident or Emergency to attend to their role.

It will be the responsibility of Team Leaders to ensure that training is undertaken by those involved in that team and also in association with other Team Leaders who will be directly involved in a Major Incident or Emergency, e.g. the chair of the Business Recovery Team.



At the conclusion of each year, based on the review of the Major Incident Guide in February, the leader will report through the review process that training of all staff has taken place. At the same time the report will also include details of the training that has taken place and who attended the training.

Additionally, where it is appropriate, the need to train any extra staff will also be included in the report.

Training Schedule

The best form of training is 'on the job'. This may be obtained where staff actually perform their roles in a real situation. In these cases there will not be a need to train staff if an activation has taken place and those taking part in that incident have worked well, provided that the guidance given in this document has not been challenged. Those members of staff who have experienced their team or role working correctly will not need to exercise for a further period of twelve months. However, it may be useful to the trainer if they assisted in training those who were not involved or new staff being trained for the first time.

However, if during the course of the incident, staff were found to have been lacking in any skills required for the post or as a result of the incident this guide has required some or all of it to be re-written, training will be undertaken as soon as possible. This will ensure that in any future incident personnel involved are fully conversant with the requirements of the post and the guidance has been amended to show the lessons learnt from the previous incident.


Courses and Seminars

Where it is appropriate the Head of the Civil Protection Unit will identify courses and seminars that should be attended by members of staff, e.g. Local Authority Incident Officers attending suitable courses at the Cabinet Office Emergency Planning Training College.

Attendance at seminars can be a useful method of collecting information regarding the experiences of others during a Major Incident or Emergency. Where this is the case it will be necessary for the attendees to report on the main issues that were highlighted at the seminar for implementation where appropriate within the Swindon Borough Council Major Incident Guide.

Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum

The training sub-group of the Local Resilience Forum has a training protocol that is intended to identify the training needs of all partners over a rolling five year programme.



Where appropriate, full advantage of the Local Resilience Forum's training programme will be undertaken by Swindon Borough Council. This will be achieved through the Head of the Civil Protection Unit who will ensure that appropriate members of staff are selected to attend all courses e.g. the Integrated Emergency Management course.

Multi-Agency Training

Through the Local Resilience Forum sub-group it will be possible to also train with those partner with whom staff will be working during a Major Incident or Emergency. This type of training allows staff to gather a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of these other agencies and to build confidence in their own working practises.

Every five years a live Major Incident exercise is conducted by the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum involving large numbers of staff from the local agencies. This exercise is a major test of plans and roles and responsibilities during a local Major Incident or Emergency. It is vitally important that as many staff as possible are involved in the exercise.

Action Plans

Introduction

Within the Emergency Planning field there are often a number of new structures that are proposed to deal with particular aspects of a Major Incident or Emergency. This is particularly so following an event that is either national in its effect or calls upon the direction of Central Government during the course of the event. This was the case during the summer flooding of 2007 that affected large parts of the country.

Sir Michael Pitt was instructed to conduct a review of the emergency response to the floods and consequently he produced recommendations to deal with any further incidents. In some cases the recommendations were not just confined to flooding events but the wider response to a Major Incident or Emergency.

In order that Swindon Borough Council captures the recommendations and can subsequently be audited on their response, the Head of the Civil Protection Unit will prepare an Action Plan.

The plan will identify the recommendation needing attention, what actions are being taken, who is responsible for undertaking the action and the date that the action must be completed by. The responsible person must be a named individual and not a department or group.

The Head of the Civil Protection Unit will maintain each Action Plan and ensure that all actions are completed within the allotted time scale. Where appropriate these results will then be written into the Major Incident Guide and / or its supporting guides.

However, it is not just national reviews that can be dealt with in this manner. It is possible to complete an Action Plan for any number of different events, including internal emergencies, exercises and reviews.

Each Action Plan will be linked to this document and be available to view at any time. It also provides the opportunity to audit Swindon Borough Council's response to incidents and its review of continued development of Civil Protection within Swindon Borough Council.

Currently there are three Action Plans. They are as follows:

Swindon Floods 2007	Corporate Board Report
Sir Michael Pitt Report	Interim recommendations for urgent action.
Civil Protection Unit	Internal Audit Report.



Supporting Guides

The following is a list of other guides that will be used in specific areas of the response to a Major Incident or Emergency.

Alerting Procedures Guide.

Bomb Threats and Suspect Packages Guide.

Business Continuity Team Guide.

Children's Service Responding to a Major Emergency a Guide for the Local Authority and Schools.

Emergency Operations Centre Guide.

Extreme Weather Guide.

Weather Warning Guide.

Faith Communities in a Major Incident Guide.

Guide to the Administration of Emergency Rest Centres.

Influenza Pandemic Guide

Job Descriptions Guide.

Local Authority Incident Officer Guide.

Media Major Incident Guide.

Radio Usage Guide.

Roles and Responsibilities.

Shelter and Evacuation Guide.

Strategic Command Team Guide.



Schematics

The following schematics are available from the list below and are also included in the Strategic Command, Business Continuity Team and the Local Authority Incident Officer Guides.

The schematics are:

Command and Control within Swindon Borough Council during a Major Incident or Emergency.

Information Flow within Swindon Borough Council during a Major Incident or Emergency.

Major Incident or Emergency Forms

The following forms are also available at various locations within both this document and also the Supporting Guides mentioned above. Additionally, they will be made available to those individuals and departments requiring them in numbers during a Major Incident or Emergency.

All forms have been prepared using Swindon Borough Council's corporate colour.

The forms include:

Basic Impact Assessment.

This form is designed for use in assessing the external impact upon Swindon Borough Council so that the Business Continuity Team may assess how the incident will influence the critical functions of Swindon Borough Council.

Telephoned Bomb Threat - Checklist Form.

This form should be made available to those who, in the first instance, may receive a telephone threat of a Bomb. In particular Customer Services and the Control Room should have immediate and easy access to this form. It should be completed contemporaneously and be available as evidence to hand to the Police.

Decision and Action Log.

This log will be completed by all of those taking decisions and separately those who are taking actions as a consequence of the incident. It is important that all decisions, their rationale and the actions taken as a consequence is recorded and those papers kept and maintained.

First Notification Form.

On first notification it is important that details of the incident are recorded. This form allows for that process and provides a prompt to the recorder to ensure that the vital information required to make informed decisions is obtained.

Situation Report.

This report is primarily for use by the Emergency Operations Centre Manager in providing Situation Reports for the Strategic Command Team. On the reverse is the prompt guide found in the First Notification form.

Standard Message Form.

This form is designed for use by those teams, including the Control Room, who will be creating actions for others to perform. Ideally for use, but not exclusively, in the Emergency Operations Centre the form has space on the reverse to allow for long messages.