



COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN PART 1: A GUIDE

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COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING

“The community can play a vital role in the response to and recovery from emergencies. It can provide resources, expertise and knowledge in support of the response agencies. Members of the community may need to provide self-help and can also provide support for local vulnerable people who may need physical assistance or reassurance.”

***“Emergency Response
and Recovery”, HM Government***

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GUIDE TO COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING

There are two documents that make up this Guide to Community Emergency Planning. They are “Community Emergency Planning Part 1: A Guide” (this document), and “Community Emergency Planning Part 2: Plan Template”.

This part of the guide is in two sections. Section One contains some background information intended to give you an overview of emergency planning and resilience at local level. Section Two is a guide to help you complete your Community Emergency Plan using the template in Part Two. The template is a partly completed plan which can be adapted for use by any parish or local community. It is up to you how much or how little of the plan you use to suit your individual community needs. Advice is always available from the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit in Ipswich.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

Disasters have a variety of causes and effects. No two incidents are exactly the same and the effects are likewise different. They can be either man-made or natural and some constitute a minor incident to one agency while another could regard it as a major emergency, depending on their involvement. They can take place at any time and be caused by a number of factors including adverse weather, a road, rail or air accident, fire or a host of other events. Assistance may not be immediately available and in the event that the incident is very widespread or the community is temporarily isolated, residents of the parish may not receive outside assistance for some time. It is therefore a sensible precaution to have in place a plan for self-help.

What is Community Emergency Planning?

Basically, it is the ability of a small local community such a village or small town to prepare itself for, and manage an emergency that is outside the capacity of the emergency services to deal with as part of their day to day work.

There is a broad understanding of what an emergency is from the images seen on television and film, or the events reported in the press. The emergency services are normally prepared to deal with most of these events, but from time to time an incident will occur that requires resources, or incorporate aspects that they are not equipped to deal with in the normal way. You may think that your community's chances of being directly affected in an emergency are pretty slim and hopefully, you are right, but who would have thought a full-blown tornado would strike Birmingham in 2005? Remember the storm (hurricane?) of 1987! Suppose there was a really cold snap this winter and your village was cut off with deep snow for a week, with no power and limited communications with the outside world? What would happen if there was a chemical spill from a passing tanker lorry half way down your main street? What about all those aircraft that overfly your area every day? Yes, the chances are slim, but your community still needs to be prepared – just in case!

It is recommended that there should be a partnership agreement drawn up outlining each party's responsibilities and that each party will be responsible for their own liabilities. The Parish Council's appointed Community Emergency Officer should select the community's Community Emergency Team based on the availability of people experienced in management, emergency handling, first aid and nursing, catering, communications, transport, maintenance, mechanical and electrical engineering, voluntary organisations, etc.

Emergency Planning?

“A major incident is any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services, the NHS or the local authority.”

Such incidents are relatively rare, but do occur frequently enough to require special consideration; this is known as **Emergency Planning**. It is recognised that no single organisation has the ability or resources to manage and there is a need for coordination and mutual aid, a concept known as **Integrated Emergency Management**.

(Even if the emergency services are able to handle the incident, your Community Emergency Team should be available to provide whatever support the emergency services may require.)

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

The Civil Contingencies Act delivers a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom. The Act is separated into two substantive parts: Part 1: Local Arrangements for Civil Protection, and Part 2: Emergency Powers.

Part 2 of the Act does not concern us here, so we shall concentrate on Part 1.

Part 1

Part 1 of the Act and supporting Regulations and statutory guidance establishes a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at the local level. The Act divides local responders into two categories, imposing a different set of duties on each.

CAT1

In Category 1 are those organisations at the core of the response to most emergencies and are subject to the full set of civil protection duties. They will be required to:

- Anticipate and assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
- Put in place 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
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (Local Authorities only).

Those covered by the duties at present are:

<p>Local Authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All principal Local Authorities <p>Government agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency • Scottish Environment Protection Agency • Maritime and Coastguard Agency 	<p>Emergency Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Forces • British Transport Police • Police Service of Northern Ireland • Fire Authorities • Ambulance Services 	<p>NHS Bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Care Trusts • Health Protection Agency • NHS Acute Trusts (Hospitals) • Foundation Trusts • Local Health Boards (in Wales) • Any Welsh NHS Trust which provides public health services • Health Boards (in Scotland) • Port Health Authorities
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CAT 2

Category 2 organisations are less likely to be involved in the heart of planning work but will be heavily involved in incidents that affect their sector. Category 2 responders have a lesser set of duties - co-operating and sharing relevant information with other Category 1 and 2 responders.

Those included at present are:

<p>Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity • Gas • Water and Sewerage • Public communications providers (landlines and mobiles) 	<p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail Operating Companies (Passenger and Freight) • Transport for London • London Underground • Airports • Harbours and Ports • Highways Agency 	<p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Executive <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Common Services Agency (in Scotland)
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Category 1 and 2 responders will come together to form 'Local Resilience Forums' (based on counties/police areas) which will help co-ordination and co-operation between responders at the local level.

The Act enables the Minister to alter the membership of both Categories of responders in order to ensure flexibility and to take account of future developments.

While it is primarily focused at civil emergencies, Part 1 is improving the UK's ability to deal with the consequences of a wide range of disruptions by improving the planning process at a local level, building better contacts between organisations and ensuring what goes on at the local level fits in with efforts at the regional and national levels.

National Arrangements

The Cabinet Office has a Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) who provide advice and guidance, in particular through the Emergency Planning College at Easingwold, near York. However, all Government Departments have a role in emergency planning, often through taking a **lead agency** role, e.g. the Environment Agency in a flooding incident, or Highways Agency in an incident affecting the road network. However, the Government feels that the best and speediest response can be arranged at local level, led by the emergency services. To encourage suitable co-ordination, funding is paid to local authorities for the provision of an Emergency Planning service.

Local Arrangements

Each Local Authority in Suffolk receives its own allocation of funding from the Government. How that is spent is determined by each Local Authority. In Suffolk all local authorities (except Ipswich Borough Council) have agreed to pool resources to fund a Joint Emergency Planning Unit providing a service to all within the agreement.

Integrated Emergency Management is guided by the Suffolk Resilience Forum, which is made up of senior officers from the emergency services and local authorities, who meet quarterly to discuss policy issues that affect or could affect the life of the people of Suffolk.

These policies are then passed to the Suffolk Resilience Forum Support Group and relevant working groups who undertake the detailed multi-agency working to translate the policies into the necessary tasks for the Emergency Planning Officers in the different organisations.

There are numerous other meetings, groups, seminars, workshops, forums, etc. between the local authorities, emergency services, industry, government organisations, utility companies, the military and many others, to work towards Integrated Emergency Management.

Role of the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit

It is the role of the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU) to encourage and assist local authority management and departments to consider their response to an incident or emergency. This includes:

- Risk Assessment
- Provision of expertise and specialist advice and to act as staff officer to the Chief Executive during any emergency
- Preparation of plans for identified risks and as required by legislation
- Training and Exercises
- Operational procedures and structures to control and to co-ordinate an effective response
- Keeping up to date with national plans and procedures
- Learning from the experiences of others.

Role of the Local Authority Departments

Departments should consider their response in relation to the following aims:

- Assist the emergency services
- Help the victims
- Protect the environment
- Maintain services
- Work with others to restore normality

INITIAL RESPONSE TO WIDESPREAD EMERGENCIES

The Problem

Widespread emergencies are generally related to severe weather and/or failure in essential public services/utilities. The former tends to cause the latter. Emergency response resources are often unable to meet initial demand for assistance and will be prioritised in favour of the most needy areas. Communities may be physically or practically isolated from outside help in the short term

How Prepared is your local community for an emergency?

- What would your community do if you were isolated and unlikely to receive external assistance for 24 hours or more?
- Who would take the lead in coordinating any local response?
- Do you know what resources, human or otherwise, are available within the community for use in such an emergency?
- Would your community be able to put these resources to best use and later integrate them with external assistance?
- Are you aware who the most vulnerable people are within your community during an emergency and what their special needs are?
- Is your community aware of any significant local hazards, which may exacerbate a general emergency situation?
- Does your community understand how the emergency services, the local authority and other agencies work together to deal with a major emergency and how they can assist you?


A Solution: Emergency Planning in the Community

Most rural communities do not have an emergency response infrastructure but do have useful resources. There is, therefore, a need for pre-planning and coordination at community level to initiate a timely response. Good local pre-planning, coordination and communications will ensure that limited external assistance is applied to best effect in a widespread emergency. The community will feel confident in its ability to offset the worst effects in the early stages and reassured in its understanding of the wider response structure. Community spirit will be enhanced through ownership of its emergency response function and individual members motivated into a realistic state of preparedness.

What can be done by communities to prepare for an emergency?

Plan! “Community Emergency Plan, Part 2” is a Plan Template you can use or adapt as you see fit. Section Two of this Guide takes you through the paragraphs in the template one by one to help you understand the plan and advise you on its completion. The idea is for you to use as much or as little as you feel is right for your community.

What can your community do to help itself in the initial stages of an emergency?

- Activate the Community Emergency Plan and, if appropriate, any specific plans for the incident.
 - Open and set up the pre-designated Community Emergency Centre and nominate the Response Coordinator.
 - Advise the Police that the centre is open and the contact arrangements and give them a local situation report.
 - Mobilise necessary human and physical resources as per the Plan/s.
 - Ensure you have adequate communications with mobilised resources.
 - Set up and staff a Temporary Rest Centre if necessary.
 - Coordinate availability of human and physical resources on a priority basis.
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SECTION TWO

INTRODUCTION

This section is designed to take you through Part Two of the document: the Plan Template. You can use the template as it is written, substituting appropriate parts to suit your community, or use it as a guide to writing your own plan from scratch. **At the back of the template there is the facility to list the resources, both human and material, available within your community for use during an emergency.**

AIM

The aim is the pivotal statement of the document and should cover what you plan to achieve.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives outline how you intend to achieve the aim.

INSURANCE

You are strongly advised to include something about insurance cover (in this litigious age) to ensure everyone involved knows where they stand. You will need to establish that the insurance policy used by the parish council has a section that covers the activities of volunteers acting on behalf of the council. The usual case is that the Parish Public and Employers' Liability insurance provides cover for any 'authorised volunteer acting as its agent' in relation to an emergency response for as long as certain criteria are met, including there being a formal structure to the response; the leaders must have some training in emergency response, risk assessment and health and safety issues; a system exists for the formal activation of the group and the council have been informed; a register of volunteer responders is kept; and a debrief takes place to capture a record of activities. The local authority's indemnity/liability insurance will not normally cover any action undertaken without that authority's blessing, nor will it cover injury or damage caused by vehicles or equipment not belonging to the authority, or additionally any damage caused to such vehicles or equipment. Normally, appropriate insurance cover is the responsibility of the individual or group involved. It is recommended that there should be a partnership agreement drawn up outlining each party's responsibilities and that each party will be responsible for their own liabilities. You must seek advice from your insurance company so you are sure of your ground.

PLAN ADMINISTRATION

This information can be placed on the front cover of the plan. The author is both an individual and a group, e.g. Fred Bloggs, on behalf of Anyplace Parish Council. The date the plan is published should also appear along with the planned review date. Usually the first review is after one year, although it will be reviewed anyway after the first exercise (or incident if you should be so unfortunate!). The version can be a first draft, and final draft, a working draft or Version 1 once the working draft has been finally approved.

PLAN ACTIVATION

Everybody who needs to should be completely sure they know when and who can activate the plan. You need to limit the numbers to keep it reasonable, but have enough people listed so there's always going to be one of them available when the emergency occurs.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY OFFICER (EO)

This person should be a willing and well motivated individual who possesses good leadership and managerial skills and be capable of motivating others in both small teams and large groups during such critical periods as will be experienced during an emergency. Individuals who possess all these skills are few and far between, but someone with most of them could still make a worthy leader. (When the EO is recruiting team members, possession of the 'missing' skills may be a governing factor.) It would be good if you can recruit a well known and well respected local figure into this role, but whoever it is they *must* have the wholehearted support of the parish council.

This EO's first task will be to consult with the parish council and draw up a list of prospective Community Emergency Team members, and then go out and encourage them to join. This will not be easy, and is why you will need a well motivated individual with strong persuasive skills, with the full backing of the council.

Once the team is recruited the EO will need to closely supervise them until they get used to their new roles, after which they will hopefully just need to be skilfully led.

When the emergency does occur it will fall to the EO and the Community Emergency Team to coordinate and lead the community's response. This is when a well put-together team will prove invaluable.

It could also be argued that another part of the EO's role is to communicate with the community the plan serves. The EO and the Team should consider the publication of the completed plan to the community. Should everybody get a copy? At least everybody listed in the contact cards should get one. If you don't give a copy to everyone, then a copy must be available to be viewed by everyone at a convenient place. They also need to develop a suitable means of communication within the community in the event of an incident. Each community is different so the particular system you develop will be unique to your community.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY TEAM

The parish council and the EO should produce a list of suitable and willing community members whom they will be able to persuade to join the Community Emergency Team. Members of the Team should be taken, if possible, from local people who are either professionally or voluntarily involved in activities connected, or could be connected with community emergency planning and response, i.e. members of the emergency services, neighbourhood watch volunteers, medical experts, specialists in mechanical or electrical engineering, people with management and administrative skills, local shopkeepers and business proprietors, a representative of local voluntary organisations, etc. Most of all they should be keen and should be leaders who will be able to encourage and activate their community. The number of people on the team is a matter for the individual communities, but it shouldn't be so small that each member has too much work to do, nor too large as to be cumbersome. You should also consider the lack of credibility which too small or too large a membership might generate. There is merit in having a core team of five or six people with sub-groups containing a number of additional specialist people covering separate aspects of the Team's tasks and areas of responsibility.

The tasks of the Team include:

A. Identifying suitable local premises for use as a Community Emergency Centre

The Emergency Centre should be in a suitable building and have adequate communications and facilities. A community centre, village hall, local school or pub would be a good choice. It should be central to the community (intellectually, not physically, necessarily!) which can be opened as soon as an emergency occurs and act as the focal point from which the community response can be managed. If it is a private building like a pub or a school, the proprietor or head teacher must be willing to open the premises whenever required. It would be good to have the appropriate person on the Community Emergency Team. Consideration should also be given to the availability of an independent power supply.

B. Conducting a local Risk Assessment





The Suffolk Community Risk Register, available on the Suffolk Resilience website (www.suffolkresilience.com), provides a multi-agency risk assessment of the hazards facing Suffolk communities. It is good practice to focus on specific hazards that your community may face, such as severe weather; flooding; loss of power; road, rail or air accident (you don't need to be near an airport to be regularly overflowed by military or civil aircraft); storm damage; release of toxic fumes; etc. You may have a petrol garage in or close to your village. Using the graph below you can allocate a risk rating to each hazard you identify with consideration to the likelihood of the incident occurring against the effect it would have on your community if it did occur.

Assess the likelihood of a particular event occurring by deciding on a point from “Negligible” up to “Probable”, then assess the impact such an event would have on your community from “Insignificant” up to “Catastrophic”. Cross reference the two points and you have a risk rating. If you have two or more events in one area, i.e. two “Very High” risk ratings, multiply the numbers to determine which is highest. These ratings will now give you a list of priorities when it comes to preparing your community. An event that is possible with a catastrophic impact has a score of 20, as does an event that is probable with a significant impact. In these cases the priority should go to the event with the highest likelihood of occurring.

You also need to identify the vulnerable residents and properties within your community and how the various hazards will impact on them.

Risk Matrix

I M P A C T	Catastrophic (5)	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Red
	Significant (4)	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Red
	Moderate (3)	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange
	Minor (2)	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
	Insignificant (1)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
		Negligible (1)	Rare (2)	Unlikely (3)	Possible (4)	Probable (5)
		LIKELIHOOD				

Key:  Low  Medium  High  Very High

C. Identifying local human resources that can be used in an emergency

People are your most valuable resource. After only a limited amount of searching you may be surprised at the expertise you have within your community. For example:

- Emergency Services personnel
- Persons with specialist skills
- Persons with control / access to key material resources
- Publicly elected figures (Local Councillors)
- Neighbourhood Watch coordinators
- Doctors, paramedics, nurses and clergy

- Builders, plumbers, electricians, engineers, mechanics and other trades persons
- Farmers, hauliers and plant hire specialists
- Owners of four-wheel drive vehicles, tractors, emergency lighting, water storage equipment, electricity generators, etc.
- Experienced Mariners
- Radio Amateurs
- Local business proprietors (shops, restaurants, garages, plant hire, etc.)
- School head teachers and key holders
- Local Council officers
- Clergy
- Persons with relevant management, leadership and administrative skills
- Members of voluntary organisations, i.e.
 - British Red Cross
 - Cruse (Bereavement Counselling)
 - Maritime Volunteer Service
 - RAYNET – Radio Amateurs Emergency Network
 - St John Ambulance
 - Salvation Army
 - Samaritans
 - Suffolk Accident Rescue Service
 - Suffolk Churches Together
 - Suffolk Lowland Search & Rescue
 - Suffolk Rover Rescue
 - WRVS, etc.
- Others who are willing and able to help as Community Emergency Centre staff, such as messengers, caterers, radio monitors, liaison officers, as well as labourers and rest centre workers, etc.

D. Identifying local physical resources that can be used in an emergency

These include buildings that can be used as temporary rest centres for people displaced from their homes for whatever reason. The premises should be dry, warm and secure, have toilets, and sufficient room to afford some privacy for families and individuals should the emergency prove protracted. Only if there is no alternative should the same building as the Community Emergency Centre be used.

Other resources to be identified include:

- Plant and equipment (farms, garages or boatyards, etc.)
- Supplies of emergency provisions (village store, pub or restaurant, etc.)
- Supplies of emergency equipment, such as:

- Fire fighting equipment
- First aid equipment
- Space heating equipment
- Lighting equipment
- Generators and fuel
- Portable catering equipment/crockery, etc
- Chainsaws, etc.
- Drinking water
- Tents
- Camp beds, bedding and blankets
- Battery or wind-up radios
- Sanitary equipment
- Waste disposal bags

E. Compiling and maintaining local emergency resource and response plans

This will involve an individual or, preferably, a small team led by the Community Emergency Officer, who will collate all the necessary information and devise plans for the community. There should be two types of plan; a **generic** Community Emergency Plan, and **specific** plans for individual hazards identified in the risk assessment for which the Team consider individual plans would be beneficial.

1. Generic Community Emergency Plan

This is the main plan for which this guide and template are designed. It could be useful to link your plan/s with existing plans of other responders and adjacent communities.

2. Hazard Specific Emergency Plan

These plans are designed for specific hazards which were identified in the risk assessment, such as a local chemical works, etc. The plan should contain all the parts of a generic plan with the addition of:

- Information about the specific hazard, contingency or site for which the plan has been prepared
- Identification of lead responsibilities of different responder organisations (i.e. who would be in charge if a local toxic gas plant exploded.)
- Identification of responsibilities of other responders

Writing these plans may, at first, seem a difficult and almost impossible task, but you must remember that your District Emergency Planning Officer, the Emergency Planning Officers of the central team, and the Emergency Planning Officers from the Emergency Services and the specific sites in your local area are all there to help and guide. You are not expected to do this on your own.

ALERTING AND STANDBY PROCEDURES

Allocate one person and a deputy to be responsible for keeping the contact details list of Team members up to date at all times. The contact details, as at Annex D, should be kept securely only by the people who need the full list. However, the contact details of the Duty member need to be passed to all interested parties, i.e. police, fire, local authority, etc.

EMERGENCY CENTRE

In many places one Emergency Centre will be sufficient, but there will be cases where an alternate centre should be allocated for use if the primary centre is denied to you, e.g. due to flooding. Selection of the back-up centre is often a simple means of designating one of the locations you rejected as a centre in the first place. If your community has electricity supplied from two sources it pays to consider this when making your selection.

Equipment.

Often, only experience will show what equipment you forgot to put on your list. Have an exercise as soon as you can after compiling your plan so such omissions, and even excess equipment, can be identified before you activate the plan for real – when, of course, it will be too late!

Role of the Emergency Centre.

The most important role of the Centre is to be a central focal point for not just the Community Emergency Team, etc. but also for the community and for the emergency services and local authority.

In order for the Emergency Centre to work properly, the community needs to

be made familiar with its purpose and to conform to the principles.

Opening the Emergency Centre

A good guide is that if you need to look at the plan you need to open the Centre, and vice versa. The plan will have the duty personnel listed at the back. You may have to 'double-up' some tasks to begin with, and even fill some yourself temporarily.

In order for your battery-powered radio to work it will need good batteries that are regularly checked.

Have a 'lay-out plan' for tables and chairs in the Box so people know where to put them all. Have place name cards for the various roles so everyone knows where everyone else is sitting. Don't expect people to bring their own pens!

You will have spoken previously to the emergency services and /or the local District Emergency Planning Officer about who you call and what you say.

It's a good idea not to change the Emergency Centre personnel (unless the incident is protracted and you need to have shifts, of course) as the

continuity afforded by having the same person in situ can make a lot of difference to the Centre efficiency generally.

Closing the Emergency Centre

The emergency services will close an incident when the time is right. You can close your Emergency Centre whenever you feel it's right, although if you do have people involved in the response in any way, it is good practice to remain open, with reduced personnel if you wish, until those people's activities are finished.

When the decision is made to close the Emergency Centre the Centre Manager and staff should adopt a set procedure to ensure that no important documents go astray. All documents, messages, logs and forms are to be gathered up and, as far as possible, grouped together logically and kept in a secure place. If possible, a digital camera should be used to record any information displayed on boards and maps. These images can be stored for reference at a later date. The Emergency Centre Manager will ensure that all resources are returned to their owners or placed in safe keeping for recovery later. The Response Coordinator is to inform all agencies and organisations that were informed when the Emergency Centre was opened and record the closing down actions taken.

DEBRIEF

There are two types of debrief. The "Hot" debrief is held immediately after the closure of the incident or at the end of an individual's shift. Its purpose is to capture immediate reactions to what has occurred so far, and is usually a personal view on how things went. Both parties should make notes at the time.

The "Cold" debrief is usually held some days after the incident when people have had a chance to think about what had happened, but not too long afterwards so that they forget. This second debrief is a more formal affair and is designed to capture the overall performance and effect of the response effort.

The Cold debrief should review all aspects of the incident and a written debrief report should be compiled outlining all the strengths and weaknesses that came to light during the incident. Those taking part must not allow the debrief to degenerate into a "witch-hunt" and even though they can sometimes be painful the debrief should not be embarrassing as it is supposed to highlight deficiencies so that learning and rectification can take place. Therefore, it is important that everyone involved must attend to ensure the widest capture of data and opinions.

Personnel must accept that lessons learned are good, and not to be afraid to speak up when they are aware of weaknesses. Sometimes this means a change in the way we do things, identifying the need for additional resources or highlighting training issues. In which case follow up action will be required,

ranging from rewriting plans to retraining, to remedy mistakes and better prepare staff for the next incident.

All documents used in the debrief will be retained and kept to hand for future reference in the event of further investigations or enquiries by other agencies. Decisions on the disposal of these documents will be made at Directorate level.

Finally, the report should be circulated to all relevant agencies. It may be judicious to do a little editing to conform with certain privacy requirements, but significant learning points must be kept in – that's the whole point of the report.

ANNEX A – PLAN ACTIVATION ACTION CARD

Action	Remarks	Name	Time
Contact at least one other member of the Community Emergency Team, and the Emergency Officer, if possible. Note 1	Enter name/s of person/s contacted	Your name	Time action carried out
Start making written notes of messages, actions, decisions and the reasons for those actions and decisions. Note 2	Use a dedicated log book so all entries are in the same place. See Annex B.	Ditto	Ditto
Monitor and assess the situation and decide whether the Community Emergency Centre should be opened. Note 3	Keep notes and enter the reasons for your decision, particularly if you elect <i>not</i> to open the centre.	Ditto	Ditto
Consider the invocation of any specific plans. Note 4		Ditto	Ditto
Contact the emergency services for advice and to establish the extent of the community's response with regard to actions or support. Note 5	Note names or appointments of everyone you speak to.	Ditto	Ditto
Inform the District / Borough Council. Note 6	Note names or appointments of everyone you speak to.	Ditto	Ditto
Mobilise all relevant people and resources appropriate to the level of response required. Note 7		Ditto	Ditto

Notes:

1. Do not attempt to do the whole thing on your own. There is no need, and you will not be thanked if the incident escalates and you lose control. Carry your team's contact details with you all the time. Remember, it's why they volunteered in the first place!

2. You will not be able to accurately recall everything that happened.

3. Even if the plan is not to be fully invoked but there is some response from the community you should still open the Emergency Centre to act as an assembly point as there may be a need for the emergency services, utilities companies, volunteers, etc. to coordinate their activities. It will also act as a focal point for the community to obtain information about the incident.

4. Specific plans will have different actions. Be sure to note clearly in the log if and when a specific plan has been invoked.

5. During the writing of your plan consult the local Police, Fire Service and Ambulance Service in conjunction with the District Emergency Planning Officer to establish a format for informing people when you have activated your plan. Some areas prefer contact with only the District or Borough Emergency Operations Centre, but others may be happy for you to let the local emergency services know your contact details and what actions you are taking directly. This must be resolved before the plan is complete.

6. Ensure you liaise with your District Emergency Planning Officer so you have the relevant contact details to hand.

7. Record all responses by people spoken to. Record all actions taken by people responding, and all failures to respond. Inaction may be significant later, and you may need to be able to show this in the records..

N.B. You may decide to make up a similar Action Card for opening your Community Emergency Centre. An example is included at the end of this guide.

ANNEX B – EMERGENCY CENTRE EQUIPMENT

Community Centres are often chosen as Community Emergency Centres as they often have much of the basic equipment already in situ. They usually have storage space on site for all the extras you will need to properly equip your centre.

Provision of the many pieces of equipment can be obtained either by personal contribution, purchase from parish council funds, or, perhaps the best way, by organising fund-raising events. If widely advertised these events can attract large numbers of people.

ANNEX C – ROLES WITHIN THE EMERGENCY CENTRE

Finding the most suitable people for the various roles will be an adventure. Persons you think would fill a role to perfection can turn out to be quite the opposite!! Try to avoid tying down members of the Community Emergency Team with a specific role in the Emergency Centre. They should be available to roam and advise within and without the Centre.

Although there's a lot to be said for the adage "One volunteer is worth ten pressed men" experience is again the key, but then you may have the possible embarrassment of having to tell someone that you were wrong and

they are unfit for the role you allocated (or worse, they volunteered for!) Diplomacy demands you tell them you have a better role for which they are better suited – if you have one!!!

If you are in the advantageous position of having excess people to fill roles, then your first Emergency Centre exercise could be used to establish the right people for the jobs.

The roles will determine the decision making process. Decisions made by those not filling those roles can be disastrous. It will be necessary to educate and train your Emergency Centre staff so they are not put out by someone else making decisions. How you go about ensuring that there is a mechanism for discussing certain aspects before the decision is made will depend on the people who staff the Centre.

Response Coordinator

The Response Coordinator is, basically, the person in charge of the Centre, and the community's response to the incident. The people you roster for this role will need to be of strong character, resolute and willing to make decisions on behalf of the community, and be a good leader.

Having a roster of such people will not be easy. If you have the luxury, don't be afraid to roster like people in lesser roles, so long as their personality can take it. You may also find that the role title causes some friction. There can be a move towards naming this role the Operations Officer or some other rather grand title, but it should be remembered that the role of the Emergency Centre is as a focal point, liaison and coordinating centre, etc. It is not operational.

Centre Manager

The Centre Manager is another role for which leadership, fortitude and a willingness to work hard is a major criteria! A primary task will be the welfare of the staff. Consideration must be given to the number of hours volunteer staff in the Emergency Centre and out in "the field" can be expected to work before having a reasonable break and before being stood down for sleep periods, etc. It should not be assumed that any incident will not last for many hours because tired people are of little use in pressure situations.

Communications Clerks

There should be at least one Communications Clerk. It is not the job of the Response Coordinator nor the Centre Manager to answer telephones and record messages. They would be too easily distracted and mistakes would be made. A dedicated communications person can devote all their attention to the task in hand and ensure proper records are kept.

Log Keeper

The information handled by the Emergency Centre Team is key to the decision-making process. It is best to keep these records in a single dedicated log book for ease of reference. The log must be securely stored as it may become a legal document.

Other staff

Display Clerk.

If you have enough staff you could consider a dedicated Displays Clerk. That person would be responsible for all displayed material, from wall charts and maps, to whiteboards displaying actions taken, etc. Have only one person doing displays, as with more than one, messages and notes may be either left off (thinking that other clerk had done it) or put up twice (possibly causing confusion, especially if they are slightly different). Legible handwriting is a must, as misinterpreted displays can be worse than no display at all.

Liaison Officer.

Someone with good communication skills who can liaise with all manner of persons involved in the incident. They could go out to the local emergency services control point to liaise with emergency services, etc. to see if any assistance can be offered. They must be careful not to A) get in the way, and B) place themselves in any danger. Thus, it is always best to be invited to send a Liaison Officer rather than just to send one.

LIAISON WITH OTHER RESPONDERS

At this stage the writer of the plan should make contact with the local Emergency Services and the District or Borough Council and seek advice as to what liaison arrangements they would like to make with regard to the plans you are making for your community and for when the Emergency Centre is opened.

POST INCIDENT REVIEW

After an incident has taken place and the plan has been used, there should be a meeting of all involved to assess the effectiveness of the plan, highlight any weaknesses and, if necessary, suggest rewrites. There should be no attempt to apportion blame for anything that may have gone wrong. The idea is to work together to resolve problems.

CONTACT DETAILS, ETC.

The cards at the end of the plan will need continuous review if they are to be relied upon.

The listed cards are only suggestions and some may be of no use, whereas your Community Emergency Team may identify additional cards for your particular circumstances, especially if you have Hazard Specific Plans.

EXAMPLE COUNTY EMERGENCY CENTRE ACTION CARD

If you are opening the Community Emergency Centre use this aide-mémoire to assist you. The actions need not necessarily be carried out in the order depicted on the card.

Action	Remarks	Name	Time
Get the key from the key holder.		Name of person carrying out action	Time action carried out
Pick up the Emergency Box, if not stored in the Centre.		Ditto	Ditto
Once in the Centre, open the Box, open the Emergency Log and place the Centre Signs. Note 1		Ditto	Ditto
Set up the Centre as per the Lay Out plan. Note 2		Ditto	Ditto
Set up radios, etc. to help monitor the incident. Note 3		Ditto	Ditto
Inform outside agencies. Note 4		Ditto	Ditto
Establish extent of emergency and level of response required. Note 5		Ditto	Ditto
Evacuation? Note 6		Ditto	Ditto
Transport infrastructure? Note 7		Ditto	Ditto
Community self-help? Note 8			
Contact non-present residents. Note 9			

Notes:

General. Use the Remarks column to note any difficulties encountered for any particular action.

1. The entry in the log should have:

- a serial number (they should follow on from any previous entry so every entry in the Log has a unique number);
- the date and time (use the 24hr clock to avoid confusion);
- the message (the first part would be that you opened the Centre and on whose authority, and the second should be the reason!);
- any action taken as a direct result of the message (such as “informed Police” or “asked Mr. Bloggs to provide a generator”, etc.);

- the name or initials of the person making the entry.
2. The 'lay out plan' should show positions for tables and chairs, telephones, computers, etc. and setting up should include placing paper and pencils, maps, etc. about the room.
 3. Local radio can be a useful tool in obtaining information should the community be cut off. If the centre has satellite TV the 24hrs news channels can be invaluable in a major crisis. Keep a list of radio station frequencies with the radio.
 4. This would include the pre-arranged contacts, such as Police Control, Fire Control and/or the Local Authority Ops Rooms, as well as adjacent parishes, as per your permanent contact list.
 5. This would be part of the previous action, as while you are in contact with the emergency services and the local authorities, you will establish the extent of the emergency. The level of your response will depend on how badly your community is affected. It should also be noted that you may be the first to react and you will be informing others about the incident. In which case have the facts and figures at your fingertips before you make the call.
 6. Will any people in your community need to be evacuated? Certain people do not need to have their homes threatened to be in need of evacuation. If they are vulnerable or weak they might just need looking after, and that may be better done if they were all in one place. If the power is off the nominated rest centre may be the only place that has heat and hot food, so not just the vulnerable will want to be there!!
 7. Are the roads blocked? Can help and supplies get through? Are you cut off? If so, for how long? If roads are impassable, and it is during a working day, there will those in the community who may be away at work, who may not be able to return. People in their households may need help later. Children at school may not be able to get home, or, if they can, their parents may not be able to.
 8. Allocate tasks to personnel in the community: assistance to other residents; road clearing; opening the rest centre; arranging power and fuel; arranging for supplies of food and fuel; refreshment and relief for the Centre staff, and other volunteers, etc.
 9. Get in touch with residents who are away from home; contact schools where residents' children are; establish what people intend to do, and if possible where they will be, including any change in contact details.

N.B. You may wish to make up a simple card for closing the Centre so nothing is missed. It should have such actions as ensuring everyone is debriefed; ensuring *all* documents are stored securely; returning all materials to the Box and noting required replacements; return Centre to its original state; dispose of all unwanted perishable supplies, etc.