

RESPONDER COMMUNICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This section outlines technical communication principles across the responding community. Communication with the media and general public (Warning & Informing) is dealt with within the Public Communications section of the Cumbria Emergency Plan (CEP).

Detailed emergency telecommunications arrangements, **where they themselves are subject to disruption**, are contained within the Resilient Telecommunications Plan.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Business Continuity Management

The ability to respond effectively relies to a large extent on telecommunications. It is essential that all responding agencies have well developed and tested business continuity plans in place. In particular, interdependencies and vulnerabilities concerning utility provision and telecommunications need to be fully explored, understood and planned for by each responding agency.

Dynamic Response

Where applicable, an appropriate member of Cumbria Constabulary (an Airwave Tactical Advisor in the first instance) will convene counterpart members of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) as the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), to provide tactical advice to Strategic and Tactical Co-ordinating Groups. Where there is a delay or difficulty in establishing the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) the initial responsibility for providing advice will rest with Cumbria Constabulary. Once convened, a technically competent manager from Cumbria Constabulary will assume the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Chair.

Where, as a result of infrastructure failure such as a bridge collapse, communities become vulnerable through an inability to communicate, the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) will develop appropriate contingencies, using the Resilient Telecommunications Plan. For this reason it is also important to consider the Public Communications section of the Cumbria Emergency Plan (CEP).

Existing Operational Plans

The Local Resilience Forum Resilient Telecommunications Plan and Cumbria Local Resilience Forum Airwave Standard Operating Procedures (derived from National Police Improvement Agency guidance) for multi agency interoperability must be considered as the basis for all subsequent activity.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Cumbria Constabulary (supported by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)) will be the lead agency for delivering telecommunications plans throughout the Acute phase

of any incident. This does not mean Cumbria Constabulary has sole responsibility. It simply means that the Constabulary will fulfil its co-ordinating role.

It is essential that Category 2 responders, upon whom Category 1 responders are dependent, fulfil their statutory responsibilities in working with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

The Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) will agree lead responsibility for telecommunications, if applicable, during the Recovery phase.

KEY ACTIONS

The Cumbria Constabulary Force Incident Manager (FIM) will contact the duty Airwave Tactical Advisor to provide initial advice. The Tactical Advisor, or appropriate person, will make arrangements for formation of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The Airwave Tactical Advisor or the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) will consider activation of the Local Resilience Forum Resilient Telecommunications Plan and Cumbria Airwave Standard Operating Procedures (based on National Police Improvement Agency) plans.

If appropriate, the Force Incident Manager (FIM) on behalf of the Cumbria Constabulary Gold Commander will activate the Mobile Telecommunications Privilege Access Scheme (MTPAS).

The Cumbria Constabulary Force Incident Manager (FIM) will consider distribution of the Home Office Airwave terminals under Interim Bronze Interoperability Solution (IBIS) arrangements – see [Appendix 1](#).

All responding agencies will consider the activation of respective Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans to ensure the continued delivery of Critical Services.

RESOURCES

Each agency is responsible for ensuring adequate arrangements in the facilitation of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the activation of business continuity plans.

STRUCTURE

Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG)

The purpose of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of the emergency and to establish the policy and strategic framework within which lower tier command and co-ordinating groups will work. The Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) will:

- determine and promulgate a clear strategic aim and objectives and review them regularly;
- establish a policy framework for the overall management of the event or situation;

- prioritise the requirements of the tactical tier and allocate personnel and resources accordingly;
- formulate and implement media-handling and public communication plans, potentially delegating this to one particular agency
- direct planning and operations beyond the immediate response in order to facilitate the recovery process.

The requirement for strategic management may not apply to all responding agencies owing to differing levels of engagement. However, emergencies almost always require multi-agency co-ordination and rarely remain entirely within the ambit of a single agency. It may, therefore, be appropriate for an agency not involved at strategic level nevertheless to send liaison officers to meetings of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG).

As part of the tasking process, Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG)s may commission the formation of a series of supporting groups to address particular issues. For example, given the likely demands of the immediate response from the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG), it is good practice, in most emergencies with significant recovery implications, to establish a Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG).

Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG)s must develop a strategy for providing warnings, advice and information to the public and dealing with the media. If a Lead Government Department is engaged in the emergency, then the co-ordination of media lines and information given directly to the public is essential if public confidence is to be maintained.

The Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) does not have the collective authority to issue commands or executive orders to individual responder agencies. Each organisation represented retains its own command authority, defined responsibilities and will exercise control of its own operations in the normal way.

As a multi-agency group the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) has collective responsibility for decision-making and implementation. To achieve this the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) relies on a process of discussion and consensus to reach decisions at strategic level and to ensure that the agreed strategic aim and objectives are implemented at the tactical and operational levels. These discussions, including both decisions taken and not taken or deferred, must be logged for future scrutiny. Effectiveness at strategic level rests upon every member having a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities and constraints of other participants. The required mutual understanding and trust will be cemented through training and exercising.

Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG)s must comprise representatives of appropriate seniority and authority in order to be effective, and representatives should be empowered to make executive decisions in respect of their organisation's resources. In a long-running emergency, the need for personnel to hand over to colleagues will undoubtedly arise. This underlines the necessity for each organisation to select, train and exercise sufficient senior individuals who are capable of fulfilling this role.

It will normally, but not always, be the role of the police to co-ordinate other organisations and therefore to chair the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG).

The Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) should be based at an appropriate location away from the scene. The place at which the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) meet is referred to as the Strategic Co-ordination Centre (SCC).

This will usually, but not always be at the headquarters of the lead service or organisation (e.g. police headquarters). The location of meetings may shift if another agency takes the lead of the Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) in relation to the recovery phase. In the preparation phase, consideration should be given to the arrangements suitable for a range of scenarios and alternative locations should be identified for business continuity purposes.

Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG)

The purpose of the tactical level is to ensure that the actions taken by the operational level are co-ordinated, coherent and integrated in order to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency. Individual responder agencies may refer to the Tactical level as Silver.

While a single agency will usually be identified at an early stage to be the lead responder, they do not have the authority to command the personnel or assets of other involved responders.

Where formal co-ordination is required at the Tactical level then a Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) may be convened. This will usually comprise the most senior officers of each agency committed within the area of operations, and will undertake tactical co-ordination of the response to the event or situation.

Working in co-ordination the responder agencies' tactical commanders will:

- determine priorities for allocating available resources;
- plan and co-ordinate how and when tasks will be undertaken;
- obtain additional resources if required;
- assess significant risks and use this to inform tasking of operational commanders;
- ensure the health and safety of the public and personnel

Although each of the senior officers at the tactical level will have specific service or agency responsibilities, together they must jointly deliver the overall multi-agency management of the incident and ensure that operational commanders have the means, direction and co-ordination required to deliver successful outcomes. Unless there is an obvious and urgent need for intervention, tactical commanders should not become directly involved in the detailed operational tasks being discharged by the operational level.

In a rapid onset emergency when there is an identifiable scene and the emergency services are in the lead, then tactical co-ordination will usually be carried out from an incident control point (which may be termed a Forward Command Post) located

nearby or directly adjacent to the scene. An alternative location should always be identified as a back-up. A Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) may, as a response progresses or circumstances dictate, be re-located to a point further removed from the incident site.

However, in determining this, the responder bodies should ensure that the Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) is established at the most appropriate location to carry out the function required of it, including the convenient attendance of all appropriate responder representatives. In the event that co-location of tactical commanders is not possible, appropriate communications or representation to ensure a co-ordinated response at the tactical level is essential

The effectiveness of the tactical level as a joint, multi-agency organisation rests on a systematic approach to multi-agency co-ordination. Irrespective of the pressure of operations, the Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) Chair must create time for regular, structured briefing, consultation and tasking meetings with his/her counterparts and key liaison officers. Co-location will assist these processes, which should be defined, documented and embedded through training.

When an emergency occurs without a specific scene (e.g. disruption to the fuel supply or an overseas emergency with domestic effects), a Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) may still be required to deliver effective multi-agency co-ordination.

In those cases where it becomes clear that resources, expertise or co-ordination are required beyond the capacity of the tactical level (e.g. where there is more than one scene or incident), it may be necessary to invoke the strategic level of management to take overall command and set the strategic direction. Once this occurs, tactical commanders will continue to effect multi-agency co-ordination within their area of responsibility, while simultaneously directing tactical operations within the strategic direction and parameters set by the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) and promulgated through their respective agencies strategic commanders.

A suitable environment should be used, which may be a local police station, to ensure that an effective meeting can be held. Generally, this will be in a suitable room at a local police station or other building.

The Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) should meet as frequently as required by the circumstances of the incident. All key decisions should be recorded in writing for audit purposes. A standard agenda can be used focused on tactical issues.

Operational Co-ordinating Group (OCG)

Operational is the level at which the management of immediate “hands-on” work is undertaken at the site(s) of the emergency or other affected areas. Individual responder agencies may refer to the Operational level as Bronze.

Personnel first on the scene will take immediate steps to assess the nature and extent of the problem. Operational commanders will concentrate their effort and resources on the specific tasks within their areas of responsibility – for example, the police will concentrate on establishing cordons, maintaining security and managing

traffic. They will act on delegated responsibility from their parent organisation until higher levels of management are established.

Individual agencies retain command authority over their own resources and personnel deployed at the scene, but each agency must liaise and co-ordinate with all other agencies involved, ensuring a coherent and integrated effort. Under some circumstances this may require the temporary transfer of one organisation's personnel or assets under the control of another organisation.

In most, but not all, instances, the police will co-ordinate the operational response at an identifiable scene.

These arrangements will usually be adequate to deal with most events or situations, but if events demand greater planning, co-ordination or resources, an additional tier of management may be necessary. A key function of an operational commander will be to consider whether circumstances warrant a tactical level of management and to advise his/her superiors accordingly.

Operational commanders become responsible for implementing the tactical commander's tactical plan within their geographical area or functional area of responsibility. To discharge this successfully, they need to have a clear understanding of the tactical commander's intent and plan, their tasks, and any restrictions on their freedom of action, on which they in turn can brief their staff.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Where applicable, an appropriate member of Cumbria Constabulary (an Airwave Tactical Advisor in the first instance) will convene counterpart members of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) as the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), to provide tactical advice to Strategic and Tactical Co-ordinating Groups.