



Exercise Oak

Desktop Based Severe Weather Exercise



It is 10:30 on Friday 18th December.

There has been a week of high pressure over the UK resulting in freezing temperatures day and night. Minimum temperatures have been as low as minus 12 degrees C. The ground is frozen to a depth of 25 mm over much of the County and some open expanses of water have been frozen for the last 4 days.

Today started much the same until about 09.30 hours when a band of heavy snow combined with strong winds swept into Cumbria resulting in blizzard conditions. This has continued and Highways Agency and Cumbria County Council are now reporting that they are struggling to keep some roads open. Widespread drifting has occurred with severe drifting up to 3 metres high on exposed sites.

Considerations

Think about the further consequences of the weather.

Consider the potential effect on vulnerable people, and on-going concerns?

Additional challenges on elements of your plan when mobility around the area has been compromised?

Community Emergency Plan Planning

Facilitors Sheet



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Facilitator Notes

Ask the group to work through the scenario using their emergency plan, together with making key decisions along the way.

A pad should be provided for the group to note key action and decisions, as well as note areas or information which would benefit the plan.

Always bring the conversation back round to using the plan.

Facilitators Pointers to Share with the Table:

- Access and egress will be limited – Who has a carer or may be concerned? Prescription needs? School Children returning home from school.
- What else might happen as a result of the weather – power loss, water loss, transport disruption, boiler freeze?
- Consider contacts included in the plan, evacuation location and procedures, and roles within the plan.
- What else might happen as a result of the weather – power loss, water loss, transport disruption, boiler freeze?

Prompt Questions for Facilitator if required:

1. What key actions should be taken at this point?
2. Who is responsible for activating the Community Emergency Plan?
3. Who needs to be informed at this stage:
 - a. Within the local community?
 - b. Within the wider community?
4. What priority, if any is given to the order in which people are called?
5. How will these people be informed?
6. What records need to be kept?
7. How will the local response be coordinated at this point and by whom

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At a convenient moment pass the written inject onto the table (please see handouts section).

INJECT ONE

At the end of the midday news on BBC Radio Cumbria, the following statement is read out:-
“There is concern over the anticipated volumes of snowfall expected over the next 12-24 hours over parts of Central Cumbria. Large accumulations have already been observed and there is significant transport disruption with many roads closed”.

Considerations

- Activation of the plan, and continuing to inform the community of the situation.
- Vulnerable members of the community.
- Forward planning for the next 24 hours.

Prompt Questions for Facilitator:

1. What key actions should be prioritised with the new information?
2. Who else now needs to be informed:
 - a. Within the local community?
 - b. Within the wider community?
3. How will the plan be activated?
4. Why do they need to forward plan? What about sharing the work and ensuring key members get rest time?

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INJECT TWO

The weather is now starting to clear and the snow fall has started to ease, it is after 6pm and dark. Several properties in the local area have been cut off and there is concern from some residents about water and boilers freezing. Using the decisions made it is time to think about recovery and returning to 'normal'.

Considerations

- How to stand down the response and who is going to lead on recovery.
- Forward planning over the weekend, should the weather deteriorate again.

Prompt Questions for Facilitator:

1. What key actions should form the recovery?
2. How will this plan be shared:
 - a. Within the local community?
 - b. Within the wider community?
3. How will the plan be reactivated if required?

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When the exercise has reached a natural break or conclusions please conclude the exercise with the following:

Debrief

Please ask the table each for two points for the following two questions:

- What were the 2 least successful aspects of the communities planned response?
- What were the 2 most successful aspects of the communities planned response?
- What are the 2 most significant things I have learned?
- How can my community use this learning / experience to improve our future planned response?